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Leonid Fialkovskin

Stalingrad apocalypse

Great Patriotic War "Unknown War

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Tank brigade in hell

Moscow "YAUZA" "EKSMO" 2011

UDC 355/359 BBK 68

F 48

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Design of P. Volkov's series

Fialkovsky L.I.

Stalingrad apocalypse. Tank brigade in hell / Leonid Fialkovsky. - M. : Yauza : Eksmo, 2011. - 448 p. — (Great Patriotic War: Unknown War).

15VM 978-5-699-49076-9

Although diaries were completely banned at the front, the author kept daily entries throughout 1942. This unique document is a detailed chronicle of the Battle of Stalingrad, a confession of a veteran of the 254th Tank Brigade, who fought the decisive battle of the Great Patriotic War from the Don steppes to the Volga slopes and from the Red Army's November counteroffensive to repulsing Manstein's deblocking blow and completely liquidating the "boiler". During the 200 days and nights of the Battle of Stalingrad, the brigade lost more than 900 personnel and was reorganized three times after the loss of all tanks. This book is an extremely candid and truthful story about the bloodiest battle in human history, which became the turning point of the Second World War.

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I dedicate to the blessed memory of my brother-soldiers in the 254th tank brigade, who gave their lives in the Battle of Stalingrad for our Motherland, for the liberation of peoples from the fascist yoke. May their memory be sacred!

From the author

Today, when there are so many attacks on the past, when there were many flaws and they stick out even more, each new generation, including my son and grandchildren, want to know and ask: how we lived and worked, what we thought and dreamed about, how we endured and won in such a bloody war as the Great Patriotic War, when such a difficult and difficult period passed before it. What was the war imposed on us? An avalanche that engulfed us like a natural disaster, for each one individually

and the people in general? What did she do with us, what did she bring us to, how did she enter into the fate of every person and crumble him? The man turned out to be a sliver in the whirlpool, but the people survived and won. How can a modern person imagine what happened then, at that time, during the war?

They ask how they could let the enemy reach the Caucasus and the Volga, were such heavy losses suffered by our army and people inevitable? How did it happen that in the post-war period the life of the victors became much worse than the vanquished? Was everything in truth, in conscience, what did you hope for in the future?

Yes, we, front-line soldiers, hoped that after the war the Motherland would be extraordinary in terms of its social structure, majestic in its authority, equally fair for all nationalities inhabiting it, spacious for the soul and thought, and would become a beacon for all oppressed peoples. peace. After all, we were the force that delivered the world from fascism. And why do our hopes for the post-war

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fair, just humanly normal life not justified?

These questions cannot be avoided. And it is excruciatingly difficult to answer them, because not everything was clear and understandable to us at that time. Nearly seven decades have passed. All the less alive are eyewitnesses and direct participants in the war. The author wrote about his personal experience.

The book is based on the combat material of the 254th tank brigade, which actively participated in the Battle of Stalingrad from the beginning to its end, in which the author served as a senior military paramedic.

The author spoke about the soldiers of the brigade - tankmen, repairmen of military equipment and medical workers, about their daily worries and military deeds, exploits, friendship, love, meanness, betrayal, about the fate of female doctors in the war, the fate of the civilian population, - women in the war zone, showed the war, which he himself saw and experienced - an unprecedented tragedy of the people.

The presented material makes it possible to present through the combat life and fate of ordinary war workers almost all stages of the Battle of Stalingrad, which lasted 200 days and nights, from July 17, 1942 to February 2, 1943, day after day.

If the reader has a desire to learn from an eyewitness and participant in these events how he and his brother-soldiers then lived, fought, what they dreamed about, what they hoped for, read this book. You will find an honest and truthful account of these events.

Leonid Fialkovsky, born in 1923, retired lieutenant colonel of the medical service, veteran of the Great Patriotic War (Stalingrad and 3rd Belorussian fronts), veteran of the Soviet Army and labor.

Chapter first

THE MOTHERLAND CALLS (July 17 - August 5, 1942)

Friday, July 17, 1942 GOT AN APPOINTMENT.

Finally he was assigned to the tank unit. We, six military paramedics, will be taken tomorrow to one of the tank brigades that are being formed in the forest near Kostyrev, Tula Region. They spent about two weeks in Moscow in the reserve of the Main Military Medical Directorate of the Red Army, where they were sent after graduating from the Leningrad Military Medical School named after N. Shchors already in Omsk, where they continued their studies after evacuation from the autumn of 1941.

We were placed in the barracks of some military school. Painful rooms, bunks on two floors. They fed in the reserve three times a day and very poorly. I wanted to eat all the time. While they were waiting for the appointment, they looked around Moscow.

After the rear, Omsk was struck by the military appearance of the capital. Harsh, bristling, overcoat. Barrage balloons are on ropes in the sky. On the ground there are anti-aircraft installations, around which girls in military uniforms were mostly fussing. Military cars, columns of transport vehicles with guns on a trailer, military units on foot. Open side cars with civilians armed with old rifles, cars and buses with men and women with shovels and crowbars in their hands. Megiki with sand on monuments. Paper tapes glued crosswise on the glass of windows. Needles at crossroads. Patrols: military and civilian with red armbands. All this

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alarmed. The absence of children was especially disturbing. You don't see them on the streets. This further emphasized the front-line state of the city. Air raid alerts were issued frequently. Often there were air battles over the city. Bombs of broken single and small groups of enemy planes are exploding in different areas.

Many medical workers arrived in the reserve: doctors, paramedics, pharmacists. They did not stay long - they went to the front. Representatives of various branches of the units that were being formed came. Every morning they lined us up and announced where people were needed, and asked those who wanted to. They raised their hands, went out of order, left to take shape in the office and immediately subsided. Often called out of action according to the list, invited to the office and issued referrals to parts.

The situation at the front became more and more difficult. In recent days, there has been talk in the reserve about a breakthrough by German troops of our defenses in a large sector in the south of the country, enemy hordes rushed beyond the Don to the Caucasus. It had to be determined.

At the evening formation, they read out that military paramedics were needed in the tank brigades that were being formed, and for some reason I raised my hand. He was immediately introduced to the tank commander, who selected military paramedics. In wartime, this was not the right choice. I did not have a clear idea about the nature of the service, depending on the type of troops and location. I didn't think about profit - there was a war, they were shooting everywhere. Tank forces? Let them be tanks.

Saturday, July 18, 1942 FORMATION OF A COMPANY.

They brought us to some forest, to the headquarters of a tank brigade. Soon the assistant chief of staff built our group according to height and began to determine the divisions of the brigade, starting with the smallest growth. I ended up assigned to the technical support company of the brigade as a senior military paramedic. I was given a location

companies - A section of the camp territory: several dugouts for people and a platform for transport.

Near the dugouts stood a table roughly knocked together from fresh planks. Behind him sat and stood about a dozen commanders. There were no more senior in rank than with three cubes in their buttonholes. They pointed me to the company commander. I introduced myself to him and reported that I had arrived to serve as a senior military paramedic in the technical support company of a tank brigade.

His first question surprised me:

Can you heal clap?

The nearby commanders smiled.

"If I have the appropriate medicines, I can," I replied.

"Remember, doctor, this was not a joke," and added: "Stock up on the necessary medicines for this — they will come in handy in the war."

Also said:

- I hope you can bandage your hands, head and something else there?

- I can.

- I'm kidding. You must have been taught that. Listen to me carefully, doctor," continued the commander.

- Now let's go to the formation of the company. We will distribute people into platoons and squads. I order you, together with the foreman of the company, to select two cooks, a storekeeper and a commander of an economic platoon from the people allocated to the company and send them to the brigade warehouse to receive field kitchens, inventory, products. Starting tomorrow, we feed our people ourselves and in general, you are fully responsible for sanitation and everything related to cooking. You and no one else. And I will ask you. And so that lice do not start in the company. Follow this. After the formation of the company, get all the necessary property from the medical platoon of the brigade ... And from the gonorrhea too - pay special attention to this, - he laughed in a peculiar way with an aspiration. The laughter was malicious, without a smile on the face and immediately broke off.

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Then he turned to everyone:

- Everyone go to the formation.

I picked up the suitcase and asked the commander where to put it.

- Should I keep it? There is no left-luggage office here, and I'm not going to start one.

Noticing my confused look, he added:

— Commanders are accommodated in that far left dugout, and put your suitcase there. And run to the ranks.

I became among the commanders at the head of the company. There was a command from the senior lieutenant:

Rota, get up!

After twenty seconds:

- Equalize! Attention!

The command was uttered in a very quiet, somewhat hoarse voice with two accents on every word.

— Comrade military engineer! The company of technical support of the tank brigade was built according to your order. The deputy commander of the company, military engineer Kalmykov, reports.

The company commander raised his right hand to his cap with his palm turned to the ranks and said:

Hello, fellow Red Army soldiers and commanders!

- Hello! We wish you good health! We wish you good health, comrade commander! discordant voices sounded.

- Well, the army! Finally the commander said. - You need to answer the greeting: "We wish you good health, comrade military engineer!"

He walked along the line, stopped and repeated:

— Hello, comrades of the Red Army and commanders!

- We wish you good health, comrade military engineer! - answered the system in chorus.

- I am your commander - a military engineer. My surname is Mikhailovsky. Everything about me. I represent the rest of the bosses. Deputy for political affairs - our

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commissar, senior political instructor Titov. My deputy, military engineer Kalmykov. Repair platoon commander, second-rank military technician Gulenko. Commander of a transport platoon, military technician of the second rank Manko, commander of the department for the repair of electrical equipment, military technician of the third rank Dyakov, commander of the department for the repair of weapons...

You are part of the technical support company of the tank brigade," Mikhailovsky continued. - So far without a number and field mail - they will assign it in days. Our main task is to ensure the serviceability of tanks and wheeled vehicles, weapons, repair them on the battlefield or near the battlefield, or at some distance, depending on the situation. Repair of military equipment in any conditions, in any situation! Tanks must be on the move, the wheels on all vehicles must rotate, cannons, anti-tank rifles, rifles, machine guns and pistols must fire. Further. Our transport workers will deliver fuel and lubricants and food to the front lines. This is our service, our fighting life. Now everyone will be divided into platoons and squads. Your appearance is no good. You are a unit of a combat tank brigade, and not ... - he stopped, then added:

— God knows what. See for yourself who you look like!

In the ranks, the overwhelming majority of them were middle-aged artisans: drivers, tractor drivers, turners, metalworkers, tinsmiths, welders, carpenters and others. Almost all of them, until yesterday, were purely civilians, both Red Army soldiers and commanders dressed in all military uniforms. Perhaps not a single Personnel was among them. This was determined by their appearance, by their gait, by the way they talked, how they saluted, how they wore uniforms. These people are accustomed to peaceful labor, land, family, housekeeping, and various worldly concerns. And here they were assembled to do a completely different job. Plus weird clothes. Outfit not matched. Didn't make it or didn't

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fit the size. Of course, the essence is not in appearance, not gathered for the parade. But they were not very suitable for military affairs either. The whole appearance said that they had no place here in the forest, among tanks and cars. They do not need this system, uniforms, equipment, saluting and other attributes of military life. It seemed that a command would follow, and everyone would go home. And yet they no longer belonged to themselves. All this unusual will become the content of their new and unusual life.

The commander's voice rang out:

Platoon and squad leaders! Now pick up people according to the staff list and put them in order. What can I pick up from the foreman of the company from uniforms and shoes - get and replace. But not now. The foreman hasn't received anything yet. For now, trade among yourselves if you find a suitable exchange.

They picked up the commander of the household platoon - Mezentsev (student, musician), the storekeeper - Lukyanov (an accountant, under 50 years old, lame), the cooks - Kharitonov (a tractor driver by profession) and Shikhalev (handyman) who were in the ranks. There were no professionals.

— What do you think, doctor, can they be trusted to cook food?

- They are not cooks, you need to look for others.

- There will be no others. Until there is. From restaurants will not send. You can only choose among these people. You will take a sample, you will be the first to eat, the first you will be poisoned. So strictly control and help. Check all this brethren for syphilis and stuff. Let's take a look at what kind of people. Go get everything at the brigade warehouse: kitchens, inventory, food. Strictly according to the statement. Mezentshev bears all material and moral responsibility. Senior lieutenant Zavgorodny will go. Go. And you, doctor, can go get your property.

On the site, the distribution of the rest of the people into platoons and company squads continued.

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Sunday, July 19, 1942 I AM LOOKING FOR A TRIBUNAL.

I got a big scolding for the first breakfast. They boiled barley porridge with stew and tea. The porridge turned out to be not only with stew, but also with some sort of greasy admixture of a dark color.

The night before, after receiving the kitchens, inventory, products, we discussed for a long time how to cook porridge, soup, borscht and other tricks of cooking. The knowledge of my wards is very poor. Yes, and I had no experience and no training in cooking. Until late we got acquainted with the arrangement of kitchens, examined the inventory, decided what was what. Almost did not sleep at night. We went with the kitchens to the well, filled the boilers with water and flooded them for testing. We made sure that there was good draft in the furnaces, that the water boiled and the excess steam hissed out of the safety valve. I warned the cooks to wash the cauldrons well with the same hot water, and fill it with fresh water for breakfast. I did not see how the boilers were washed. He left in the morning to rest. When I took a sample (I tried it with a spoon from a ladle), the porridge was like porridge. True, it seemed to me, with some kind of metallic aftertaste. But I thought it was because of the new boiler. Haven't tried tea. Allowed breakfast. The first groups of people received and ate the porridge, and the subsequent groups began to notice some streaks of black mass in the porridge and raised a fuss. The cooks Kharitonov and Shikhalev were at a loss, confused, they could not explain anything.

"Some kind of blackness, damn it, is coming out of the cauldron," Shikhalev kept repeating.

I took the scoop, stood on the footboard of the kitchen and scooped up the porridge, moving it along the bottom and wall of the boiler. In addition to porridge, a black thick mass accumulated in the scoop from the bottom and wall of the boiler. Turned to the chefs:

- Who washed the boilers and poured water?

- I flooded and Shikhalev flooded. We both went with the kitchens to the same well where you allowed us to take water yesterday, and filled both boilers, - answered Kharitonov.

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- Did you look at the boilers before pouring, were they clean? Who washed them?

- Clean, washed. Shikhalev washed.

— How did you wash the boilers, Shikhalev?

- Hot water that boiled.

— And what else? How was it then?

— So it was. He poured out that water, first with a bucket, then with a ladle, and poured fresh water at the well.

- What did you wipe the bottom of the boiler with?

— Nothing. I drained all the water and filled it with fresh water.

— Nobody could pour anything into the cauldron?

— Shouldn't. We were close all the time.

The company commanders and the political officer, senior political instructor Titov, approached. Someone already told them what had happened. Red Army soldiers and commanders gathered near the kitchen - they came with bowlers for breakfast.

— What did they do? Report, doctor!

- Some kind of mass got into the porridge, dark, like ointment.

- Where did it come from? Who could sleep? They decided to poison people, unfortunate cooks. Everyone will go to the tribunal and you will go with them! Were you present at the laying of the products? he stared at me.

"Until late at night, we discussed how to do everything, looked at everything, checked the kitchens and heated them. He instructed the cooks where to get water and when to put food...

— I ask: were you present at the laying of the products?

- No. It was very late.

"That's the first thing you will answer. God forbid, if there is at least one poisoning. You will go to the tribunal first.

- I'm not a cook. I didn't cook the porridge and I shouldn't tie myself to the kitchen all the time.

- Shut up! I don't need excuses. I ordered you to take care of nutrition, doctor, you! And I will ask you. Commissioner! Gather all the people who have already eaten

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porridge, in one place and watch them, and you, doctor, come with me.

° And the commander walked quickly to his car with a booth in which he was located. Something dawned on me, and I went to the second kitchen, opened the lid of the cauldron, where tea was brewed, and ran a ladle along the bottom and wall of the cauldron. A thick black mass also accumulated in the scoop. I ran into the car to the commander with a scoop. He called the brigade headquarters and reported on an emergency in the company and asked to send a representative of the special department to investigate.

I tried to convey my thoughts to him, but he did not even give a word. He waved his hand, and when he hung up, he parted ways. From his mouth fell a stream of abuse mixed with swearing. For the first time in my life, I received a scolding in the most biting terms. He said that someone was trying to disable people in order to disrupt their sending to the front, and I helped this by lack of vigilance. And I can't escape the tribunal, because I must strictly follow his orders, and not let things take their course. Should not leave the kitchen until the newly baked inexperienced chefs learn something. It turns out that I am a sissy who cannot be trusted to get rid of me at the first opportunity and stuff like that. I stood at attention and listened. I forgot that I have in my hands a scoop with the ill-fated grease. When he had, as it seemed to me, spoken out, I put in a few words.

"Why are you shouting and insulting me like that?"

- Shut up, sucker! He also took it into his head to teach me," he interrupted me, "you poison people, but I be silent.

- Please don't insult me.

- You poison people, and I admire you!

"No one was poisoned, the boilers were covered with anti-corrosion factory grease, and the cooks did not remove it from the surface of the boilers," I managed to say. - In the cauldron where Tea is, there is also such a lubricant. And I handed him the ladle.

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- Here you see! Who should check the boilers? Who was to control everything related to nutrition? Who, I ask!? Who did I order to be in charge of cooking? Answer! Not for me

to do everything.

There was some kind of indifference to everything he said, I even stopped distinguishing the meaning of the words ... I realized that I had to leave, opened the doors and began to get out of the car.

"Stop!" I heard his voice again. - Tell the foreman to give the personnel a dry ration for breakfast: bread and canned food, and I will deduct its cost from you. Now go!

I went out. Why did he insult me so, and how to proceed? Would punish if guilty, but listen to the flow of such swearing? How can we continue to serve together? We are going to the front, and how is it possible? I need to leave the company. How to be further? I may have missed something, but I'm not supposed to work for the cook. I have a lot of other things to do, and there will be even more at the front. And the cooks are useless and they can still chip away, and the demand will be from me. Who should teach them? I was taught at the school to control nutrition, norms, calculate the calorie content of food, sanitary and hygienic rules and culinary processing of products, preserve vitamins in food, but not how to cook it. With such thoughts, I went from the commander after a monstrous dressing and did not know what to do next. The commissar approached me, reassured me a little, sympathized, said that the commander was sharp, hot and quickly departed so that I would not accumulate anger at him and mind my own business, that breakfast was torn off, and it could have been even worse if they had been poisoned People. It's good that it all worked out. This case will serve as a good lesson for the future for me and for would-be cooks.

Monday, July 20, 1942 WE RECEIVE EQUIPMENT, PROPERTY.

During the day, reinforcements arrived: Red Army soldiers, mostly drivers, junior commanders. They received and mastered military equipment - special vehicles with

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large booths instead of a body. They were called flyers - workshops on wheels. They received tractors, tractors, wheeled trucks ZIS-5, GAZ-51 and foreign ones: Studebakers, Fords, motorcycles with a Harley brand sidecar. I was surprised by the appearance of our transport vehicles, especially the GAZ-51. The cabin of the car looked strange. Its frame was made of wood. Front - flat glass in a wooden frame. The roof is tarpaulin. On the side of the door, in the lower part, a tarpaulin was also stretched, but there was no glass in the upper part - the wind was walking. For summer, the cabin is bearable. But what about in winter?

— Saving metal, glass. Understand, brothers!

"What about when it rains or when the cold hits?" voices were heard.

Crews with T-34 and T-70 tanks arrived in the battalions. They heard about the first cars as our best tanks. And not only ours. Went to see them. The crews were kept by the birthday people. We received equipment and supplies, which were distributed according to the staffing schedule. While we were working on the equipment, we were mastering it, checking its serviceability, and completing it. Most of the company's people were already working in other units, repairing cars and tanks. They ran, they fussed, they swore.

Many drivers were indignant and did not want to take understaffed cars, but there was nowhere to go. Keys, cranks, spare wheels — tires with discs began to disappear. dragged friend



at a friend.

I received medical equipment: a PF kit (field paramedic) — a set of medicines and tools, a sanitary bag, a stretcher, a set of dressings and splints. Addressed to the commander:

— Where to load medical equipment? Give me a place, transport.

- I have no nannies. Choose a car yourself, where it is free, and put your own with other property. On the same machine and you will drive. A special car or a personal one for the doctor is not provided. By the way," he continued, "why are you avoiding me, not saying hello?"

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I shrugged my shoulders and didn't answer.

We are not going to get married. You have to fight, so don't make yourself a muslin lady. I, as a commander, must achieve order in everything and do not choose means. Get used to it and do your job the best you can," he added patronizingly.

It was necessary to determine the property somewhere. I turned to the commander of the transport platoon, Manko, and he assigned me a GAZ-AA on-board vehicle, in the back of which I put medical equipment and kept to this driver. He carried a sanitary bag with the most necessary medicines and dressings with him.

Tuesday, July 21, 1942 REVIEW OF THE BRIGADE.

The day came for the review of the brigade by representatives of the armored and mechanized troops of the People's Commissariat of Defense. In the morning, at the formation, Mikhailovsky announced that in the afternoon there would be a review of personnel and equipment and the presentation of the Red Banner. He ordered all commanders to carefully prepare for this event. The formation of the brigade has not yet been completed, not all staff positions were filled with people, and not all equipment has been received. The almost fully equipped motorized rifle machine-gun battalion numbered 194 had just arrived. Tank battalions numbered 655 and 656, which were called the 1st and 2nd respectively, were still understaffing, putting the equipment in order. Finally it became known when and where we would go, to which front.

After lunch, they pulled out in one row all the vehicles, fully loaded with the property of the company, as they were to follow along the way. Then the personnel of the company were built. No one really knew where and how the equipment should be worn. They hung it from one shoulder to the other, then it turned out that it was originally correct, and they hung it again. They ordered to lay out the contents of each duffel bag. Allowed to leave the most necessary,

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throw out the rest. But everything seemed to be the most necessary, a lot of things were hidden in pockets, in the bosom. It was difficult to part with familiar objects, perhaps not needed, but connected with the past.

Finally, the command followed: "Become." We were all standing anyway. A bus approached along the central road, drove into a clearing, and stopped in front of the formation of the brigade. The command followed: "Equal!" We were somehow equal, because because of the roll of the greatcoat we could not see the neighbor on the right, and the company commander, together with the foreman, either pushed us forward, then pushed us into the ranks. A group of commanders got off the bus

- Attention!

The brigade commander reported:

— Comrade Colonel! The tank brigade was built on the occasion of the formation. The brigade commander Lieutenant Colonel Lipin reports.

Hello fellow tankers!

We wish you good health, Comrade Colonel! - not quite amicably, discordantly, but the system answered at the top of its voice.

- Listen to the order of the Deputy People's Commissar of Defense, commander of the armored and mechanized troops of the Red Army of the Soviet Union, Lieutenant General Fedorenko No. 0703293 dated 07/21/42 ...

The colonel unfolded the folder and read out that we were assigned combat number 254 and field mail number 32500. Then he folded the folder and said in a higher voice:

- Congratulations on the formation of a tank brigade!

— Hurrah!.. Hurrah!.. Hurrah!

“The commander instructed me to give you the symbol of the unit — the Red Banner of War!”

An officer from the arrived group separated from the bus with an unfurled banner in his hands, accompanied by two machine gunners, and approached the place where the colonel and the brigade commander were standing. The colonel took the banner in his hands and said:

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- Attention! Commander to accept the combat Red Banner. I wish the 254th tank brigade victory over the enemy!

The brigade commander knelt down, took the edge of the banner in his hands, put it to his lips, stood up, took the banner from the colonel's hands and said:

— Comrade Colonel! Tell the commander that I, the tankers and all the personnel of the 254th Tank Brigade entrusted to me, will not spare blood and life itself for the complete victory over the accursed enemy - the German fascist invaders!

Then he turned to the ranks, raised the banner with his right hand above his head and exclaimed:

We swear, comrades!

- We swear! - voices from the heart sounded out of order.

- Submachine gunners of the control company, come to me!

A group of submachine gunners from a reconnaissance platoon headed by their commander, to whom the brigade commander handed over the banner, headed towards the commander with a clear marching step.

- Under the Red Banner of War, brigade, at attention! And the commander turned to the scouts. - Along the formation in the head of the column, march at a pace!

With a clear step, holding the unfolded Red Banner, the scouts followed the head of the column. The personnel followed her with their eyes. The scouts began to line up at the head of the brigade.

The colonel from the headquarters of the armored and mechanized troops opened the folder again and read out:

“The 254th tank brigade is to dive into three echelons and leave at the disposal of the commander...”  
the colonel paused, “of the En Front. — Loading of the first echelon on July 23 of this year. He tore his eyes away from the folder and added: “A day later. Order, submission time

echelons and the route will be brought to the attention of the brigade commander and his headquarters. Loading in Kostyrev. Once again, I congratulate you on the formation of the brigade and the presentation of the Red Banner of War to it. I order for the remaining one or two days to put in order the equipment and weapons.

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Check everything, get what you need. We are facing tough battles with a cunning and strong enemy. The people and the Party have entrusted us with first-class military equipment, and we must justify this trust. Step by step march!

All in formation went to their location, where near the equipment they tramped until dark.

Wednesday, July 22, 1942 GETTING READY FOR LOADING INTO ECHELONS.

The formation of echelons and preparation for their loading began.

They worked day and night. They prepared wire, ropes, bars for attaching cars. They wrote letters, hurried to tell the number of the field mail to relatives, without hope that the letters would reach them. There are many of us from the western regions - people did not know where to write: whether relatives remained in the occupation, whether they got out somewhere and are alive: whether. I informed my distant aunt in Leningrad about myself. We agreed with our relatives at the beginning of the war, when we parted, that we would all write to our aunt, and she would inform us about each of us. No one could even think then that the enemy would reach Leningrad.

Thursday, July 23, 1942 MEETING OF MEDICAL WORKERS.

Before dinner, a meeting of all medical workers of the brigade took place. We were gathered on the lawn near the cars of the medical platoon (MSV), waiting for the military doctor of the 3rd rank Rappoport, who was at a meeting at the headquarters.

The military doctor came, pulled out a scribbled piece of paper from the clipboard, put it on the table, said:

— Comrades! I have already got acquainted with the personal file of each of you. For a general acquaintance, I will name the title, surname and position of everyone on the list, and you get up and introduce yourself.

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That's how I got acquainted with the military doctor of the 3rd rank Hasan-Zade. Zoya Lozhkina, a medical platoon doctor, is of medium height, a well-built, ruddy, fair-haired woman with a short haircut, about twenty-five years old. Maya Weinstein, the same age as her junior doctor, is swarthy, skinny, with expressive dark blue eyes covered in long black eyelashes.

From the medical platoon there was also a medical instructor Lyuda, a strict, unsmiling woman of about thirty, military assistant Shepshelev - head of a pharmacy, medical instructor Ivanov, military doctor of the motorized rifle machine-gun battalion Panchenko, military assistant of this battalion Lenya Modzelevsky, military assistant of the control company Semyon Gomelsky, military assistant of tank battalions.

The foreman clarified our staffing according to the staffing table. When asked when and where we would go, he replied that he did not know, but that they should soon leave for the front. He recalled the order of evacuation of the sick and wounded.

In the evening the loading of the first echelon of the brigade began. The mood in the company was alarming, they did not tell us about the situation at the fronts, there were no newspapers, there was nowhere to listen to the radio here.

Saturday, July 25, 1942 WAITING FOR LOADING.

Nobody is following us. What awaits us? What has fate prepared for us? A month has passed since I left the walls of the medical school. They were awarded the title of "military paramedic". There are two cubes in the buttonholes. New cotton uniform, canvas belt, empty tarpaulin holster, forage cap, boots, duffel bag - everything we had with us. No, not all. We were also eighteen years old.

A difficult part of life passed during my studies, especially in winter — we created conditions close to combat ones. They also survived the bombings with fires in Leningrad, participated in the elimination of their consequences, survived the bombings and on the road, cold and half-starved Omsk. For short days and long evenings, something has been invested in us

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in the head, necessary for the war. They traveled in groups, mostly to the west.

My Belarus has been under a German boot for a year now. I myself could not understand why the Germans won victory after victory. How did we allow it? Why do we succumb to it, what do we expect? The war has been going on for more than a year, and there is no turning back. I am afraid of all these thoughts that overwhelm me, and even more so I cannot express them out loud to anyone. I may be misunderstood and draw sinister conclusions from the laws of war. I think that my comrades have not lost faith in victory over the enemy, but how far can one retreat? How to explain at least to yourself why this continues?

Sunday, July 26, 1942 OUR TURN.

In the morning after breakfast, the company in full force with all its transport left the camp and settled down near the railway not far from the loading area. The tanks of the 2nd battalion were already there. During the day, equipment was loaded in small batches as the platforms arrived. Tanks and wheeled vehicles were fortified on open platforms. The personnel were housed in freight cars - "cars", where bunk beds were equipped on two floors. They spread an overcoat under themselves and covered themselves with part of the overcoat. Under the head duffel bag. In some wagons there was straw on the bunk beds. In one of the cars they placed a food warehouse and a field kitchen - the most necessary and revered object in our military camp life. That same night, our echelon set off.

Monday, July 27, 1942 WHAT IS THERE FOR US?

The first day we were mostly at dead ends, maneuvering on the tracks, stopping at small stations and half-stations. The big ones drove by without stopping.

I was assigned a place in the car, where they were located mainly foremen-repairmen and commanders

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military technicians who did not have personnel under their command. We occupied bunk beds on one half of the carriage. Here, at the door of the car, I settled with my property, creating a place for medical care.

Could not sleep. De my relatives: mother, three sisters, brother, where is the father? Still vaguely imagined what we want from life, what it should be. We lived under the roof of our parents far from being in abundance, we believed that we would live better than them and make her life more beautiful and happy with our work. Our requests didn't seem big.

And yet each of us hatched plans, dreams, aspired to something. There was an attitude to life, to comrades. Concepts of friendship and love were formed. Most of us have not yet experienced the latter. Everything was ahead. But our whole life suddenly turned upside down and fell into a terrible whirlpool - war. Dreams were not destined to come true. Our destinies began to be decided apart from us. For this, we were quickly prepared. We are young and healthy. Who, if not us, should go to

war? We understood that this was not a walk. There is little chance of returning from it, and there is nowhere to go. It swallowed up a huge territory, millions of lives of innocent people. The queue is behind us. Can we do anything while we are alive?

The war went on for over a year. It touched everyone, young and old, each in a different way. The war has entered our lives: into everyday life, actions, and the psyche. Everything turned upside down in each of us. What's happening? How to understand all this? What awaits us in this whirlpool?

Lulls the clatter of wheels. The train is driving us south

Tuesday, July 28, 1942 TRAIN GOING SOUTH.

The echelon continued to go south, and stops in pughis became shorter and less frequent. We barely had time to stock up on water for cooking and drinking. It became even more difficult to cope with natural needs. Small things were adapted to be done from the doors while the train was moving, and large ones had to be endured for a long time.

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Wednesday, July 29, 1942 WHO WILL STOP THE ENEMY?

We drove through Ryazhsk, Michurin, Gryazi. The echelon rushes us to the south We learned from the local population that our troops had left Rostov. The enemy is rushing to the Caucasus, to the Volga. When will this end?

My comrades and I were indignant, indignant, perplexed, some wept from pain and impotence when we learned that the enemy was occupying more and more new territories. Is he really that strong?

What happened to such a big country like ours? Ge her strength, power? We have been told for years that we will defeat any aggressor who dares to attack us, and in songs they sang: "If tomorrow is war, if tomorrow we are on a campaign, we are ready for a campaign today ..." OR "... We are STRONG, And our tanks are fast..." But what about in reality? After all, we believed everything.. Many wrote reports, asked to go to the front before graduation. Who and when will stop the enemy? From whom to expect help? Apparently, everything depends on us. This cannot continue for the peoples of our country. It becomes unnatural to its strength, its spirit, its history. The Soviet Union rallied the peoples of our country into a monolithic family, for whom the interests of the Motherland are their own. The Soviet people gave a lot of blood and lives for freedom and independence. They all want to take it away from him. Deprive the most valuable - life. It is not enough to die for freedom, for the chosen way of life, we must defend all this. Each nation will stand up for each other as for itself. Everyone has the same problem, the same fate. Together they began to build a new life, the more they will defend it. If not for ourselves, then at the cost of our lives for children, sisters and brothers. Stand up for yourself! Rely on no one. The Allies did not open the promised second front. What other efforts are needed by the people, the country? What about the party, Comrade Stalin, in whom we have unlimited faith and believe? Isn't it time yet?

A huge terrible monster absorbs the territory and peoples of different countries of Europe. The brown monster was born about ten years ago. Could not understand

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what threat it, fascism, bears to mankind. Why didn't they stop him in the bud, why did they feed him? Didn't the rulers of other countries, such as France, England and many other European countries that suffered from fascism, know what danger the brown plague poses to the existence of all of them? Why isn't it stopped now? The second year of the war is already underway. Where is the second front?

The elderly repairman, who had been attentively listening to our conversations, sighed heavily and said:

"I feel sorry for you guys. Healthy, smart, but what is waiting for you? Like my children and grandchildren? Where the adversary has reached, and they will not stop in any way. The information bureau can hardly keep up with him, and, after a little hesitation, he continued:

- It's near Moscow, right? Leningrad took to the brink - how long will the people hold out there? The Baltic States under the enemy, Belarus, Ukraine, Crimea, Voronezh took, Rostov. He picks up all of Russia. What will be next? What awaits us all? We have outlived ours, but you, sons, are sorry.

"Where are you going, old man?" the sergeant fumed. - Disbelief in victory. You're breaking up the counter!

- What kind of counter am I to you, son? My Soul Hurts. How much Russian land has been lost, and there is no end to this. How long will it be?

Senior military technician Sargsyan intervened in the conversation and said with an Armenian accent:

"There have been wars before. For territory, for the king, for power. But this war is special. The Germans need not only our territory, they want to destroy us. They and the imperialists of other countries do not like Soviet power, our socialist system. So they allowed fascism to grow in the hope that it would destroy our socialist state. Fascism has so far succeeded in inflicting major damage on us, but it will suffer defeat in the entire war. This is a historical inevitability. Although the prudent nation is German, but this time its generals, led by Hitler, miscalculated. They undertook the impossible and will be severely punished.

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His conviction has been passed on to us. He dispelled doubts, tuned our thoughts in the only direction - the inevitability of victory.

A fresh issue of the Krasnaya Zvezda newspaper, obtained by someone at the station, was going around. The foreman "Kroshka" read aloud the article by Ilya Ehrenburg "The Fate of Russia".

Will I have children, grandchildren? Whoever survives will be held in high esteem in front of their children, grandchildren, their own people and all the peoples of the world. Yes, the winners will be glorified for many years, centuries...

Thursday, July 30, 1942 SONGS ARE POURING INTO THE SPACE.

After dinner, the foreman of the auto platoon, who was called "Baby" behind his back because of his huge growth and heroic physique, decided to stir up everyone in the car:

- Why are you depressed, brothers, there will still be a reason, but now we will sing, or what?

And he, a resident of taiga Siberia, a hunter, sang softly, drawlingly about a gold digger who dreamed of getting rich, having a family, buying a house, but became the prey of wolves.

- With this song, I brought even more sadness, listen to this one,

And he sang an old Russian song about the young men who went to woo a certain young woman, and in order to please her, each tried to stand out with his prowess, skill, and she chose the loser herself, taking pity on him. He sang in a juicy baritone, highlighting each young man with intonations, like a real artist. It was a pleasure to listen to him. Yes, I haven't heard these songs before. The people stirred a little. Nikolai Manko, commander of the transport platoon, also sang. In Ukrainian, in a high, almost female voice. Other comrades also supported him. At some pause, the voice of Sargsyan was heard, who came to our car to bandage an abrasion on his wrist and did not have time to go to his place.

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— I listened to your songs. Good, don't say anything. Listen to ours.

And at first a quiet, lingering, and then on higher notes, supported by the driver Sulyan, poured out a lamenting melody about distant Armenia, about its valleys and vineyards, about high mountains, about loved ones, which are so far away. Although the words of the song were not known, it seemed that the guys were singing about it, judging by the sad melody. Each, as best he could, sang along with the others. So Russian, Ukrainian and Armenian songs poured out - the music of different peoples, who were brought together and rallied by a common misfortune into one whole, completely different people, but from now on the same fate.

The songs, sung together and separately, warmed people, brought them all together. The faces brightened up, the soul became lighter, the thoughts and concerns of everyone merged into a common channel, and together everything is easier to bear. And the train kept rushing south

Friday, July 31, 1942 THE END OF RAILWAYS.

Fewer stops along the way. Groups of women, children, old people stood at the stations with fruits, milk, eggs, but the train often slipped past. Where the train stopped, people approached the cars and offered dairy products and fruits. They asked for tea, salt, soap, bread in return. Sometimes they gave it away as if they were their relatives. Many, if not all, had relatives and friends at the front. Many local residents came to the stations just to look at the departing trains. It became customary for these people to meet and escort trains to the front.

Late in the evening, our echelon approached the Serebryakovo station in the Stalingrad region and stopped. We were not accepted for a long time. The station was destroyed, some buildings burned down. The day before it was bombed by enemy aircraft. They learned from the servicemen that before the bombing, echelons with tanks had gone south. Perhaps these were the cars of our brigade.

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Saturday, T August 1942 SEREBRYAKOVO STATION.

train stuck at Serebryakovo. At dawn, the Red Army men, the commanders began to get out of the cars, explore the nearby ditches and bushes. The ruins smoked three hundred meters away. We learned from the railway workers that the stations lying ahead, leading to Stalingrad, were also defeated by German aircraft. It became clear that the railroad would no longer be followed. We had to unload here, although there were no special platforms. The head of the echelon, Mikhailovsky, was waiting for instructions. The Red Army soldiers scattered around the neighborhood - they reconnoitered the area around, of course, without a team.

It became known that on the tracks behind the station, the Red Army men found a cistern with honey and were already operating there. Together with Lieutenant Zavgorodny, they sent me to find out what was the matter. Went. We saw a group of our Red Army soldiers near one detached freight train, where we went. From there there was noise, laughter. They gesticulated, fussed, pointed to the hatch of the tank. Some climbed up the narrow metal ladder to its top, At the hatch there were several fighters. Coming closer, I saw that someone was being pulled out of the cistern by the legs. The cistern was doused with a light, thick, stretching mass. Many drank it directly from mugs, cauldrons, with their heads thrown back, or sipped it with a spoon, licked their fingers. In the same way, head down, holding his legs, he was served to the laughing comrades standing below and laid on the ground. Mouth, nose, ears were filled with this mass. He was in a state of suffocation. The body writhed, twitched. Those standing nearby realized that trouble had happened to him, and began to call the doctor. My arrival came in handy. He ran up to the victim, put him on his back, turning his head to one side. With his hand, and then with a spatula wrapped in gauze, he tried to extract this mass. It was possible to clean out the cavity of the mouth and nose somewhat, but free breathing did not come. The body is soft. Turned him on his stomach, turned up the sand and gravel

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under the lower part of the chest and pressed several times sharply on the angle of the shoulder blades. At some moment, a part of the mass was thrown out of his throat like a cork, and he breathed noisily, with a screech, but did not regain consciousness.

A hysterical burst of laughter erupted. The victim was still unconscious, and I began to give him artificial respiration. He sent one Red Army soldier to our car for a stretcher and a set of "PF". At the top of the tank around the hatch, Red Army soldiers were still crowding, filling pots, cans, flasks with this mass, passing them down and collecting them in new dishes. Amid this noise and chaos, a command was issued:

- Stop the robbery, line up!

The uproar and laughter drowned out this team.

— Come out to build! Attention! the command came again.

No one paid attention, although they recognized the voice of the company commander.

- Attention! - sounded again. - Build!

Did not help. And suddenly shots were fired. Company commander Mikhailovsky fired into the air. The laughter began to subside. Everyone was blown off the tank. The voice of the foreman of the company Nikolaev was heard:

- In a line of two, stand! Equal! Attention! - and went up to the commander, who, with a trembling hand, could not get his pistol into the holster hanging on his belt somewhere behind his back.

— Comrade military engineer! The Red Army soldiers are lined up according to your order. The foreman of the company Nikolaev, - and said something quietly to him. The commander pulled out a magazine with cartridges from the pistol, fired the cartridge remaining in the barrel of the pistol into the air, inserted the magazine into the pistol and put it in a holster, the valve of which remained unfastened. The servicemen stood in the ranks with collars unbuttoned, with belts knocked to one side, and a garrison cap somehow put on. The tunics and trousers were smeared with a sticky mass. Some were armed, most were not.

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In their hands they held bowlers, cans, flasks, one - a bucket. On their faces are miserable, guilty smiles. The commander went around the line, stood in front of them and muttered contemptuously through his teeth, emphasizing each phrase:

- Who do you look like? Cattle! Wild animals! Robbers of the people's wealth! Shoot you a little! Do you want honey? It is possible that it is poison. And to hell with you! There you and the road. Where are the other weapons? Where is the weapon?!

The system was silent, people shifted from foot to note.

— is your rifle? - turned to one, then to another: - What is yours? Where are the weapons?

"It's left in the carriage," voices were heard.

Do you understand what you have come to? Military time. You are soldiers of the Red Army. They took an oath. The country is waging a heavy war, and you have engaged in looting from your own country. I will court-martial you. Everyone!

He quickly walked along the line, stopped and said:

- Leave the kettles and the bucket here. Everyone take off their belts, weapons and give them to the foreman. You are under arrest.

The smiles disappeared from their faces. I heard dissatisfied voices, exclamations.



- Follow orders! — The commander took up the pistol holster.

They began to take off belts, rifles and put them near the foreman.

- Lieutenant Zavgorodny, foreman! Lead the arrested. Put in a separate car. Junior commander Sinitsyn and a Red Army soldier... What is your last name?

— Nagiba, Comrade Commander.

: — Take weapons and belts and follow the arrested.

I took care of the injured. From our carriage, two drivers brought my PF kit and a stretcher. After injections of analeptics, the soldier began to regain consciousness. The commander asked me what kind of mass was in the tank. I did not know - I had not met before. One of the drivers said that she looked like molasses. The victim, like many others,

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tried to scoop up molasses by bending down into the hatch. As a joke, his comrades lifted him by the legs and pushed him inside the tank. This joke, fortunately, ended well. A sentry was posted at the cistern. People ate too much molasses on the spot, many managed to carry it away in bowlers even before the episode with the arrest and also ate and treated others. The foreman of the company sent a clerk from the farm platoon, and he took two thermoses. Soon the molasses made itself felt. Many were upset with the stomach, and the victims experienced great inconvenience due to the frequent need to relieve themselves.

We received an order to unload the echelon and disperse the equipment, since we were a convenient target for enemy aircraft. It was necessary to urgently build an unloading area. Centuries-old deciduous trees grew around, and a pine grove stood nearby. Several dozen trees were felled. On the logs, they lowered two on-board vehicles from the platform on their hands, on which they began to bring logs from the nearest grove for the construction of an unloading platform. We unloaded two motorcycles and a kitchen on our hands.

During unloading, we noticed that civilians were carrying bags and sacks with canned food past the station. We learned that a cannery was destroyed nearby, which made canned food with stuffed peppers and rice in tomato in half-liter glass jars. And here the Red Army did not miss the opportunity. They began to infiltrate the territory of the plant and "master" its products.

The administration and workers were nowhere to be seen. The old watchman walked around the territory and told the soldiers: "Take it, use it. The plant is not working. Stop the Germans - we will restore them, let them through - let ours get better."

Soon many of the cans of canned food were in knapsacks. We went in small groups. When they found out that they had arrested the Red Army soldiers for molasses, the raids stopped. Not without the knowledge of foreman Nikolaev, Mezentshev brought a car with boxes of canned food on one flight, which

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which he unloaded not far from the train, while the unloading platform was being built.

People faced manifestations of war: a broken station, a cannery. The platforms and carriages were burning down. Ownerless molasses, canned food - take whoever needs it. The behavior of people was controlled by the element, to some extent permissiveness. The breakdown of established foundations, the established order, the manifestation of base instincts, anarchic habits. The civilian population began to drag state property. Our servicemen have also taken up this task. They did not organize its safety, but began to plunder it. And the enemy is still far away, and there was no thought of the possibility of him capturing this territory. What is going on?

The next episode sobered people up and brought them back to reality. The air battle that arose above us attracted attention. First, we heard a rumble and saw how a Messerschmitt with a characteristic whistling sound fell out onto two of our fighters from behind a cloud, and after a few short bursts sounded, the rear one began to fall to the ground with a long plume of black smoke. The pilot separated from the plane, opened the parachute. The German fighter made a circle and shot the pilot with a machine-gun burst. It was evident how his body hung, became immobile. The parachute drifted away.

The air battle did not end there. Apparently, the German pilot got carried away, and our second fighter took advantage of this.

The German also jumped out with a parachute. Together with a group of armed Red Army soldiers, I was sent in an airborne vehicle to the place where our pilot had fallen. He took with him a sanitary bag and a stretcher. On a motorcycle with armed submachine gunners, they went after the German.

Our pilot was dead. Chest, abdomen with through wounds. A young man, almost a boy in military uniform with two dice in his buttonholes. We were all shocked by this death - the death of a warrior boy. They put the body of the pilot on a carry-Ki, loaded it onto a car and went to the crash site.

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aircraft in the hope of picking up something there, but the explosion stopped us. We turned around and drove to the crash site of the German pilot. It's almost on the road.

I said that I had studied German at school and would be able to communicate with a German. By the way, he was detained by civilians who were also watching the air battle. They disarmed him, crushed him well, which was evident from the bruises on his face and torn clothes.

The German was lying on the ground on some kind of padded jacket. Hands are tied behind the back. Cross on the neck. On the chest some badges or medals.

Those around him said that something was wrong with his leg — a fracture or dislocation of the ankle joint — he could not stand. I asked if he needed medical attention, showing him the sanitary bag to be convincing. He moved his head from side to side, turned away and said nothing. I tried to look at the leg - I didn't let it, I cursed, as I understand it. When asked where he flew out on a mission, where his part is, haughtily gritted through his teeth that he would not say anything to the Russian pig and finish with me. He behaved very arrogantly, arrogantly. It then became clear to us what kind of enemy we would have to deal with. The German plane was burning down. Another one of our cars drove up with Red Army men and a company commander. The bound German was placed in the same car where the body of the pilot he had killed lay, guards were assigned and they left in search of the flight unit.

After lunch, the personnel of the company lined up. Mikhailovsky spoke very angrily.

"From now on, for such violations I will act according to the laws of wartime — I will bring to court a military tribunal. People are dying defending their homeland. We just saw the death of our pilot. Have you engaged in looting?!"

Representatives of the brigade headquarters arrived, who were supposed to take units to new areas of concentration. The original plans had to be changed.

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Sunday, August 2, 1942 MARINOVKA.

Even at night, before dawn, the company was pulled into a marching column. We loaded the cars with the remaining property from the echelon. An engineering and technical support group was placed at the end of the column. And they assigned me there and showed me a place on an open onboard vehicle with spare parts.

Our path lay through the steppe - waterless, scorched by many days of heat. In the cracks, the parched earth, which had not known rain for a long time, mercilessly burned the sun. Clouds of dust raised by cars blocked the road and the space around. Dust and sand got into the nose, ears, eyes, crunched on the teeth. I was thirsty. The wells along our path were empty: dried up or drained. We drove fast.

At noon we made a halt for breakfast at a deep ravine overgrown with bushes. At the bottom of the ravine flowed a churning brook.

First of all, they rushed to master the bushes. It turned out that many have an intestinal disorder. I had few medicines, astringents and disinfectants. He prepared potassium permanganate and gave each a glass.

By evening we arrived at the village of Marinovka. A rich Cossack village. They lived prosperously there. The houses are solid, made of brick and wood. Gardens, fences. There were almost no men. Women, old people, children.

In the village there was our kitchen with a ready lunch or dinner. We settled down for the night in cars and houses. Some organized gatherings with young women and moonshine. Sergeant Nikolaev invited me. A company was already sitting at the table: our military technicians, foremen and Cossack women. There were bottles of moonshine on the table. A variety of homemade snacks and our ill-fated canned food. Children were spinning around. The women shared their worries, longing for their neighbors who fought somewhere, if they were still alive. Feminine sympathy. These completely alien and unfamiliar people have become somehow close to us. They understood that the front was approaching their village. They asked how we could let the enemy reach the Don? Where is our

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force? Is it permissible for him to reach the Volga? This is the end of everything. What would they do without men? Some were crying out loud. What could we say to them?

And moonshine did its job. Drink to win. People softened. They sang songs sad, sad, Russian and Ukrainian. Stayed at the table until late. The children have already been put to bed. They emptied the cast iron with boiled potatoes. Some sorted out in pairs, whispering, hugging, seeking intimacy. One and then the second couple got up from the table and went into other rooms or

to the hayloft.

I was the youngest among all. Others had families, professions, life experiences. Somehow it didn't fit in my mind, which must have been inexperienced in my youth, that after recently admiring photographs of my wives, brides, relatives and relatives in the echelon, you can so quickly reorganize, spill feelings ... Is the proximity of the front the reason for this? Or should adults be? What and how to measure their actions? How should I deal with my tablemate? How much pain and longing in the expression of her face, in the words about her husband, in fear for the fate of the child.

I wished her a speedy meeting with her husband and went to sleep in the cab of the car. Maybe you should have stayed and consoled her? Would she accept my consolation? I didn't have the courage to try or insist. Even against the background of moonshine and the example of more experienced comrades. The next day, when Nikolaev asked how he spent the night, he answered: "It's okay

"Well done, doctor," he answered.

Whatever they thought of me, this time I was pleased with myself. True, he did not dare to say that he was chilled in the cockpit. With the rest of the comrades, they did not return to talking about the previous night. Something shy of each other.

Monday, August 3, 1942 ROADS OF WAR.

Everyone got up early. It just dawned. Soldier's porridge and tea were already ready. Beyond this fantasy did not go, and the range of products did not allow. hospitable Marie-

novka and its friendly inhabitants saw off. "Darlings, stop the enemy, do not let us into our region, have pity on our children," the women asked with tears in their eyes.

The cars again stretched out into a column and moved towards Stalingrad. Again the boundless Kalmyk steppe, the land scorched by the heat, waterless beams, ravines and road DUST.

In sections along the road and ravines, women and teenagers were digging ditches and placing gouges. Large crowds of refugees were moving towards them — from Ukraine, from the Crimea. Mostly old people, women, children. The bulk of the people walked on foot with bundles on their backs or on carts. There were also wagons loaded with household goods and children. Many were followed by cows tied to them.

Temporary shelters were built: sheds made of sheets and tarpaulins. Cooked food, laundered. Along the road and right across the steppe, large herds of cattle were driven from the areas occupied by the enemy. There were also ownerless cattle wandering in groups and alone in looking for water.

Refugees were repeatedly bombed along the way. There was a continuous hum: the roar of engines, the shouts of people, the crying of children, the lowing of cattle. All this was shrouded in clouds of dust, the heat of the scorching sun. The stream moved to the east, to Stalingrad, to the Volga, away from the advancing enemy, from the bombing.

Along the route of our journey from the technical support group, a flyer from a repair platoon with a group of car mechanics and an onboard vehicle with spare parts cruised. The group was headed by military technician of the second rank Gen Alexander. Junior military engineer Kostya Naumov was driving the on-board car.

Long after noon, on one of his visits, Kostya came up to me and said:

"Come with me on a mission.

- Where and why? I asked.

- Let's go, you'll see, - he turned and went to the parking lot, on the way he added: - A car with people overturned. Help must be provided.

I'll report to the commander.

"I already informed him that I would capture you.

And he led me to the parking lot, went to the motorcycle, took the machine gun.

- Get in the wheelchair.

— I'll go for a kit with medicines.

- Sit down. Let's go with a bag.

He got into the carriage and covered himself with a tarpaulin. He rushed to the side and took me to the steppe. Forty minutes later we arrived at a settlement.

- Where are we going anyway? I asked again.

"You'll find out as long as you sit quietly and without questions," he answered. We drove into the village, drove along deserted lanes. Apparently, he lost his bearings. He turned around, drove back to the outskirts and took me to another lane, drove up to the gate. Behind the fence was a small courtyard with

flower garden, shrub. Turned off the ignition of the motorcycle, opened the gate. "Follow me," and he led along a neat path to a long house and went to the door, the upper half of which was glazed. I did not notice the sign of this building, and there was a sign on the door indicating the time of admission of patients. It was some kind of dispensary. The door did not give in - it was closed by an internal lock. He pressed the handle with force several times, then broke the lock. He led me inside along the corridor, led me into an office and stood in front of a glass cabinet. Tried to open it, but it was locked.

"See if there's any cure for gonorrhea here.

"The inscriptions are not visible through the glass," I said, and added: "We must ask the duty officer." Someone must be here.

Without taking off his machine gun, Kostya smashed the cabinet glass with his butt. Shards of glass with a sharp crack scattered around. It looked like a shell had exploded. I stared at him dumbfounded: it all happened so unexpectedly.

What are you? Grab what you need and let's go.

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Among the fragments, I found a red streptocide in two glass tubes, potassium permanganate, took Esmarch's mug with douching tips, SCISSORS.

"There's nothing better than that," I muttered.

- Went! he commanded and headed for the exit. I trotted after him, still not realizing what had happened and what I was a part of. At the exit, we ran into an elderly man hurrying from the back of the courtyard, perhaps with a watchman.

Why did you break into the clinic? What did you need there? he exclaimed. The door is closed, how dare you break it!

- It was necessary, dad! - answered Naumov and quickly went out into the street, started the motorcycle. I barely had time to jump into the carriage, as the car rushed off and rushed on the way back. Couldn't get over what happened. In his hands he held Esmarch's mug filled with tips and medicines. Finally he asked Kostya:

What have we done, what will they think of us?

"The war will write everything off," was the answer. "Don't tell anyone about this unless you want to get into trouble."

- What a bastard you are! And he dragged me into this abomination, - he could only answer him.

It was disgusting from what he had done, from participating in it, from contact with Naumov. What kind of person is he? We have to live together, communicate, fight. He is capable of everything.

- Okay, why did you hang your nose? I had no other choice. I got gonorrhea even before Kostyrev. Detected before shipping. I once asked you about treatment, YOU said that you can treat, but there are no drugs. This is where we got them. Tell me how to treat?

- Show me what you have.

— I know what clap is. Not for the first time. I will not show. Tell me how to treat?

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I gave him Esmarch's mug with accessories and medicines and told him how to do everything.

- I remind you again! No living soul should know about this. You will tell me if they ask where he went, what he drove to help the Red Army soldiers of a broken car not of our unit.

Nobody asked me anything. After dinner, we set off again in a southerly direction. They moved in a column in the dark with the headlights off. They illuminated the road with sidelights, guided by the brake lights of the cars in front. The big hindrance was continuous dust. The road was difficult to distinguish. Often stopped, stood for a long time. By dawn we reached the village of the Zetas.

Tuesday, August 4, 1942 VILLAGE OF ZETA.

Prior to our arrival in the village of Zeta, brigade units were already concentrated there: headquarters and control company, tank battalions, medical platoon. The motorized rifle machine-gun battalion was also pulled up. They made a march under their own power after unloading from the echelons. And they went even further south in the direction of Abganerovo. They left faulty equipment - wheeled vehicles and several tanks. A lot of vehicles and tanks stood along the route, along which our repair teams cruised and restored them on the spot or pulled them up to Zeta, where a technical support company was located on the western outskirts. Some people dug shelters for cars and people. Everyone got a job and did their own thing.

Not far from us, in a ravine, brigade warehouses were located.

The Zetas are very different from Marinovka. Mostly Kalmyks live here, and this was the way of life. Nondescript houses made of dung, covered with clay on top, dirty yards, fenced with fences made of dung or clay. There are sheep, cows, horses, many children in the yards. I met the owners of the house, the Kalmyks, where

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returned the medical center. My wife worked as a teacher and spoke Russian relatively well. The husband is on a cattle farm. Didn't hear him speak

ski, like many others in the village. Couldn't or didn't want to. Gloomy, withdrawn, kept apart, even avoided me. The family had two preschool children. The teacher introduced them to the life and way of life of the Kalmyks. Unlike her husband, she was very friendly and talkative. She gave me the largest room - for receiving patients. But while most of the time I was in the unit.

The Donskaya Tsaritsa flowed past the village - shallow at that time, but in some places there were pits of sufficient depth, where personnel were washed, footcloths and uniforms were washed. Until late at night, the repair of faulty tanks and vehicles continued. Ordered to send them to the units by morning. Trenches were dug around the pits.

After midnight, they were allowed to settle down for the night. Places for rest were not equipped. Everyone settled down where he could. Those who followed with special vehicles settled better than others. There were devices for recreation: hanging and folding shelves. Drivers usually slept in the cabs of their cars, and the rest - in the back. They were not allowed to stay in the houses of the civilian population, and they were packed with soldiers from other units. I was invited to spend the night by the commander of the motor transport platoon, Senior Lieutenant Manko. At the bottom of the body of one of the onboard GAZ-AA vehicles, they laid straw, which they took in sheepskins, and covered it with a tarpaulin on top. They covered themselves with overcoats. The nights were getting chilly.

It seemed that no one and nothing would wake people up, but already at dawn almost everyone was on their feet. We got up without a command. The muffled sounds of a distant cannonade were heard: weak, cannon volleys and longer, dull explosions of aerial bombs. The front was approaching. The battle was somewhere to the northwest. Our tankers and submachine gunners went south. Is the enemy outflanking us? How colossal

Should he own weapons in order to attack like that? And, apparently, the Germans are well trained. We have already had the opportunity to make sure that we also have good military equipment and not in small quantities. The new T-34 tanks look very reliable and menacing, and the tankmen speak very well of them. We saw how five more of the same tank brigades were formed in Kostyrev near Moscow. We met new formations from the Urals and Siberia on the way. There was a lot of military equipment. Here the enemy must find destruction, or we and our entire system will perish. To lose Stalingrad and the Volga means to lose everything: this is how my comrades thought and reasoned.

Wednesday, August 5, 1942. ORDER of the NCO UNION of the SSR No. 227.

The lagging equipment of the company, and of the entire brigade, approached the Zetas. From the 2nd tank battalion, after a two hundred-kilometer march, six tanks came, and the remaining sixteen got stuck on the road for various reasons. There were also quite a few wheeled vehicles. They had to be returned to service as quickly as possible. Most of the lagging equipment came under its own power after a simple repair, which could be done on the spot. The deputy commander of the brigade for technical matters, military engineer 2nd rank Ivanov, organized repair teams led by military technicians of the RTO Voropaev, Gen, Gulenko, Vanin, Sarkisyan, Naumov, Drozd, foreman Kruglyakov, sergeant Korol and others. They cruised along the path, restored faulty vehicles and sent them to the units, and those requiring more complex repairs were delivered in tows to the Zetas. One economic group delivered hot food in a thermos to people who were with outdated equipment, and also had a supply of dry rations for drivers and tank crews who were forced to stay away from their units for a long time. The head of the brigade's political department, battalion commissar 2nd rank Maksimov, arrived at the company.

„ We've been built.

The head of the political department looked around at everyone and in a clear, not strong voice said:

— Hello, comrades of the Red Army and commanders!

“Hello ... I wish ... we eat, comrade battalion commissar of the 2nd rank,” the formation answered loudly, somewhat discordantly. The head of the political department opened a clipboard, pulled out several sheets of paper with a typographical text, and began to read:

- Listen to the order of the People's Commissar of Defense of the USSR Comrade Joseph Vissarionovich Stalin No. 227 of July 28, 1942.

We stretched out to attention, froze, tried not to miss a single word. The order, with all frankness, revealed to us the most desperate situation of the country. It was bluntly stated that she was in mortal danger. It indicated that the Baltic States, Belarus, Ukraine, a number of western regions of the Russian Federation were under the heel of the enemy, that the enemy had already captured Voroshilovgrad, Valuyki, Novocherkassk, Rostov-on-Don, was rushing to the North Caucasus, to the Volga, to Stalingrad. The German invaders blockaded Leningrad, they are 130-150 kilometers from Moscow. It indicated that we had lost tens of millions of people, hundreds of millions of poods of grain, millions of tons of metal, thousands of plants and factories. The order rowed from the soldiers to stop further retreat, to stop the advance of the enemy. “Retreating further means ruining ourselves and at the same time ruining our Motherland ... To withstand their blow now and in the next few months, Tsev, means ensuring victory for us.” The order demanded to strengthen discipline and order, to exterminate alarmists and cowards on the spot: “Not a step back without an order from the high command!”

The battalion commissar put the order on his clipboard and continued:

- The Germans have broken through our defenses and are going to Stalingrad in two streams. From the west comes the 6th Army of General Pau

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Luce. With him armies of Romanians and Italians. They broke through our defenses on the Don and are pushing our troops to the Volga. From the south, from the Kotelnikovo area, along the railway leading to Stalingrad, the 4th Panzer Army of General Hoth is moving. The enemy is advancing in great force. They still have more tanks and aircraft in these areas than we do. Our 254th Tank Brigade and other units and formations of the 64th Army, of which we were a part, are on their way. But our troops are few. They are only approaching, unloading from trains. Comrades! The brigade will have to interact in the upcoming battles with the 204th rifle division. The main requirement is to prevent the enemy from reaching the Volga, to Stalingrad, to stop his advance at any cost, to stand to the death until the main reserves come up. We must stop the enemy without sparing our lives. Retreat is excluded. This is required by the order of Comrade Stalin. This is what the Motherland expects from us! Tankers, machine gunners, all the soldiers of the brigade are ready to do their duty. You, the repairmen, have to repair all the equipment that has been concentrated in the workshops and that is on the way for the rest of the day and night. Every tank, every vehicle is needed by the brigade, the front. Get to work, comrades! Death to the German invaders!

— Death Death! Death! boomed the formation.

The company commander approached the formation.

Comrade commanders and Red Army men! We listened to Comrade Stalin's order No. 227. Our retreat was over. The enemy must be stopped and defeated! Tomorrow, by dawn, not a single tank, not a single vehicle should remain in the workshops - everyone should go in good order to the battalions on the front line. Also, lagging equipment on the way should be repaired and sent to the subdivisions. I order the auto platoon to transfer all drivers free from the flight to help the repair platoon. All wheeled vehicles continue to be buried in the ground, to finish digging trenches and shelter for personnel. The enemy will bomb our location, air strikes are also possible.

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.. Be ready for anything! Commanders will receive additional tasks after formation. And people resumed the work that was now required of them. Everyone understood that the fate of the Motherland was hanging around here, near the Volga, and there was nowhere to retreat, and here his fate, his life, would be decided. I remembered the family, relatives, loved ones, as something distant, already unrealizable. Yes, everyone clearly understood that the outcome of the war would be decided here. And what can we do? We haven't had a chance to shoot at the enemy yet. Our contribution to victory is the repair of faulty equipment on which our comrades will fight. And people have taken up this task on their own.

## Chapter Two

### MEETING WITH THE ENEMY (August 6-23, 1942)

Thursday, August 6, 1942 LEAFLETS.

In the morning, our location flew around the "frame" and left. Not even a combat alert was announced. After a short time, she returned again, made several circles over our positions and dropped leaflets. A combat alert was declared. Stopped repair work and stared their eyes at the sky. We looked at the beautifully falling leaflets and the "frame" flying away. Some, without a command, fired from rifles, carbines, pistols at a far-flying aircraft. without causing him any harm, only revealed themselves as a military unit. Leaflets fell on the territory of the company and around, into the steppe, where they were carried by the wind. People began to pick up leaflets and read them. Each leaflet, in addition to the text, also had a pass to go to the enemy.



Some tore without reading, others, as if jokingly, folded them, put them in the pocket of their tunic, caps behind the lapels. A Red Army soldier from the repair platoon, Vernigora, said defiantly: "They don't ask to eat, just in case, let them lie down." He put one leaflet behind the lapel of his cap, and tore off the pass from the other and put it in the left pocket of his tunic. Did you think something about it? Maybe I wouldn't even tell myself. But, apparently, some secret hope, far hidden in the subconscious, not yet comprehended, forced to hide the leaflets. What if a wounded or even a healthy one gets captured? So that the enemy does not finish off, he will show a pass. A chance to save a life, maybe

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very doubtful chance. But still ... He will say that soubi

Xia, waiting for an opportune moment to go over to the side of the Germans. A. What if they will take this into account and save their lives? On other fronts, especially at the beginning of the war, our mature armies, formations, and units were surrounded. Many fought to the end, left the encirclement or died. Some were captured, unable to resist further due to injury or serious illness. But many surrendered to the enemy, seeing the hopelessness of further resistance, being surrounded or under other circumstances, and this, perhaps, saved their lives. Which one is another question. But there were also a few who voluntarily went over to the enemy, hating our system, for the sake of power or just to save their lives. How will ours behave? Little do we know each other, I thought then, even though we live in the same state, under the same social system. One misfortune befell everyone, and we have one Motherland. A certain attitude to it, to its social structure, took root. Then why did they hide leaflets or separately torn-off passes?

The papers continued to fall to the ground. There were voices:

- Not in vain did the "frame" fly in. This is a spy plane. Wait for the bombers after her.
- Brainless bastards! The mouths gaped and put anti-aircraft guns into the sky - take pictures of us military men!
- They gave themselves away by shooting, stupid warriors!
- So they fled into captivity, wait!
- Accustoms to culture - we will wipe our ass not with a leaf of burdock, but with a German piece of paper.

The conversations quickly ended. The company commander hurried to the sheepfolds, followed by the political instructor. The commander ordered to urgently build a company. The command of the junior military technician Zavgorodny, on duty in the company, followed:

— Rota! Get out to build!

The gong sounded. Everyone went to the main entrance 8 to a large shed, where the main repairs were carried out.

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work. She was considered central. Nearby was a pole with a crossbeam, from which hung a tied short iron pipe-gong. The main smoking room was also located here - a pit and several benches, a place where you can usually find out all the news. Orders were issued from the commanders of platoons and squads.

— Remvzvod, get up!

- Motor transport platoon, stand up!

"Weapons Repair Squad, stand up!"

— Department for the repair of electrical equipment, stand up!

— Hozvzvod, get up!

The Red Army soldiers fled to the ranks. Personal weapons were usually kept with them, and almost everyone captured him.

After listening to the report of the officer on duty, the commander intently looked at everyone standing in the ranks. The appearance did not correspond to the military unit. Some of the people were in dirty overalls, most of them were in field caps, some had tank helmets on their heads. In the hands of adjustable wrenches, hammers, bowlers. Not everyone wore gas masks. The equipment lay with someone where: most of the cars, in workshops, which could be far from the place of residence at the time of formation or alarm. People were not really explained what and when to carry with them. The system was waiting for a storm, and it broke out.

- What kind of system is gathered here ?! With whom will I have to fight? This is a herd, not a military unit!

The commander went along the line and began to poke almost every Red Army soldier in the chest, asking:

— Where is your gas mask? Where are your ammo? Why did he get into service in a helmet, where is the cap? [de duffel bag?

He walked along the line a few more times, stopped in the middle and said:

- Listen to me carefully. Always have with you, wherever you are, weapons and ammunition, a gas mask, a bag or a tablet for the commander. A flask on a belt, a rolling overcoat, a duffel bag. Build with this. Through

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five minutes everyone stand in line. Commanders stay. Disperse!

And asked the commanders:

- Why don't you deal with subordinates, your motherfucking ... and so on? People were dismissed and blabbed themselves. From now on, not only for work, but also for each subordinate, I will ask only with you.

During the re-building, the commander again examined each and continued the separation:

- Who gave the command to shoot at the German aircraft? What self-will, anarchy! Brainless herd! Don't you have commanders? Nothing is done in the army without orders. On a combat alert, without a command, they arbitrarily began to shoot at a German reconnaissance aircraft and betrayed themselves and their location to the enemy. Instead of sitting in sheepskins or hiding in trenches, they jumped out into the open area, stared at the plane and also gave themselves away by shooting. I remove the junior military technician Zavgorodny from duty. To take duty in the company to the military technician of the 3rd rank Dyakov. Car drivers! Cars with fuel and ammunition should be immediately taken to the area of the ravine and placed in caponiers isolated from each other. Place in the ravine all the wheeled vehicles that are on the move, and by the evening dig caponiers for them. Transport Platoon Commander! Build your people separately. Collect leaflets from them, all that you hid with you, and hand them over to the commissar, then take all the vehicles into the ravine. Motor transport platoon, get out of line! Follow orders!

A group of Red Army soldiers and commanders got out of order and left for their commander.

The company commander continued:

— Hand over leaflets to the repair platoon and immediately begin work. For everyone else, collect leaflets scattered around the territory and burn them here, at the gong. Deputy for political affairs to follow you

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fulfillment of the order. Dyakov to set up observers with rocket launchers - to monitor the air. Disperse!

Mikhailovsky turned and quickly went to his flying car, which was equipped for him and his deputies. Prior to this, the letuchka was a fully equipped special vehicle for repair work. The lathe and other devices were dismantled and moved somewhere. Their orderly was the driver of this car. At the gong a fire flared up, where leaflets were thrown. Was engaged in the collection of political instructor Titov.

For the first few hours people avoided talking about leaflets. They were of two kinds. Blue thick papers measuring approximately fifteen by seven centimeters. On one side at the top in the middle there was a swastika and on both sides it was printed in typographic type in large Russian letters on the right "pass", on the left in German, and below in smaller letters in Russian that this pass gives the right to cross the front line. Those who follow of their own free will will be guaranteed life and work in the new German state and the right to return to their families in their place of permanent residence. The same is printed below the Russian text in German. On the reverse side of the leaflet there is an appeal to the citizens of Russia and the soldiers of the Red Army, where it was written that they were deceived by the Bolsheviks, commissars and Jews, and were dying in vain in the war. In bolder type it was indicated that further resistance was useless, and called for an end to the armed struggle, to go over to the side of the Germans, who would guarantee a new happy life in great Germany.

White leaflets in half a standard sheet. Above, in Russian and German, "Pass" with a swastika between them and the same text as on the blue leaflets. Under the text of the pass there is a perforated line to tear it off. And under the line is an appeal to the citizens of Russia of the same text. Everything was printed on one side of the sheet.

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The content of the leaflets and the very fact of the Germans' appeal to our troops gradually began to be discussed by the personnel. There were no indifferent people. Apparently, everyone read, if not openly, then furtively. They usually shared their opinions in small groups of two or three people. Large groups also formed during smoking breaks. The main direction of the conversation was that the enemy was running out of steam, his reserves were running out and he was counting on promises to break our resistance.

But there were other opinions as well. Vernigora spoke especially much while working with his partner Kikhtenko. And he started the conversation more often. He said that the Germans were not interested in killing everyone. They need people to work. They are calling to lay down their arms and surrender. They feel strength and do not want vain victims. They need factories, factories and bridges in good condition. Whoever resists will, of course, be destroyed. Many objected to him.

"While we are working here, the "rama" will send bombers and we will all be khan. Rubbed into powder.

- Don't croak. He will choose bigger game than we do.

- He eats everything. What a strength! Where did you go? All pret and pret. Eat us with giblets.

- Do not say. Here is the cover for the German. Although there is strength, there are many of ours.

"He doesn't have enough men to hold that much land. And the people will not want to live under it. The French were expelled, although they did not do so many troubles, and our Germans, all the more, will not tolerate it.

"To hold on to what he has won, he will kill many of our people.

"He already has a little business left," Vernigora kept repeating, "here he is already. Take Stalingrad and trample on Moscow, and there the end of the war.

- [hell you, as I see it! Vaughn and put a leaflet-pass behind the cap. Are you going to the German? - the foreman "Kroshka" was indignant, took off his cap from his head, pulled it out of

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opened the leaflet, tore it up and threw it into the fire, and slapped him on the head with a PILOT. — Contra you and nothing more.

- What am I, I'm like everyone else, but don't shut your mouth. What I see, I say, as I understand. And that's my business. You don't think about my family, about my seed. Try to get them out of Poltava and help them. The arms are short. Who will think of them? Who will help them? They have all hope for me.

And how do you think you can help them? Will you surrender to a German and under your wife's skirt? Do you care about other families?

- If you are smart, tell them how to help them. Your family is in Siberia, nothing threatens them, and your soul is calm, but mine is torn to pieces. What do i do?

- Like everyone else. Defeat and drive out the Germans and free all of ours.

- These are beautiful words, but deeds are not visible.

"That's what we all need to do, but with you you won't go very far.

"I will be no worse than you in business. Time will show.

This is where the break ended. They dispersed to their jobs.

In the afternoon, the deputy brigade commander for the technical part, military engineer 2nd rank Ivanov, arrived at the location of the company. We learned from him that the 1st tank battalion under the command of Captain RUustikov in the area of the 74th kilometer junction, between the stations of Abganerovo and Tinguta, on the march was suddenly fired on from a small grove with artillery shells. The battalion did not have time to come to its senses as it lost seven tanks - six of them were knocked out, and one burned down. Four German tanks came out of the grove, turned around and went into the steppe, towards Aksai. Belatedly, they were followed by indiscriminate fire from the surviving tanks and were not even pursued, they were so confused. Lost at the same time eleven people killed and wounded. The battalion withdrew to the west of the 74th kilometer siding and took up defense there.

A group was urgently created to repair tanks and sent there, headed by a military technician of the 2nd rank Drozd.

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In the same area, during a reconnaissance of the area, the commander of the brigade, Lieutenant Colonel Pavel Iosifovich Lipin, was wounded in the legs by a shell fragment and sent to a hospital in Stalingrad. The brigade, in fact, was beheaded before the fighting. His deputy for the combat unit, Captain Sadovsky, became in command. The personnel met with the brigade commander, albeit for a short time, but they already imbued him with trust and respect. Sadovsky was not known at all, and few people saw him in person. A very difficult burden and great responsibility fell to an officer who had not yet fought, who so suddenly had to take command

tank brigade in such a difficult situation. For a week of formation, following in echelons and on the march, interaction between units could not be established. The command did not have time to properly get acquainted with each other and with the commanders of subunits and with personal composition.

The wounding of the brigade commander and his departure for treatment before the very first battle, with such a rapid advance of the enemy, the loss of the 1st tank battalion - all this could not but affect the mood of the personnel. We were all stunned by this news. They didn't even enter the battle, but such losses. And so many tanks and vehicles are out of order on the way. The units of the brigade are still on the march, they have not reached the concentration points. They demanded from our people the fastest repair of equipment, and people gave all their abilities to this. Much responsibility fell on the shoulders of the head of the political department of the battalion commissar Maksimov, the chief of staff, Major Malikov, and other chiefs, commanders and political workers for mobilizing, forging and rallying personnel into a combat unit that so unexpectedly collided with the enemy.

Friday, August 7, 1942 THE ENEMY IS COMING.

Over the past four days, people hardly slept, some, perhaps, managed to snatch some tens of minutes for sleep, and then in the afternoon, next to the repaired technical

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none. Many could barely stand on their feet, unshaven, dirty, in overalls soaked in oils and diesel fuel, uniforms and underwear. But everyone understood that a lot depends on his work. Despite the extreme physical fatigue, broken, bruised and wounded fingers and hands, the repairmen did not stop working. Drivers also helped. They hurried, although there was no need for the latter. The ever-increasing rumble of cannonade kept people on their feet - the front was approaching.

The commander of the communications department of the brigade arrived at the location of the company with a report. After his departure, the commander called all the chiefs. First, he reported the situation: the 2nd tank battalion, following to the area of concentration, on the march was subjected to bombardment by German aircraft and fire from the vanguard group of the enemy tank army advancing along the railway. The battalion lost a T-34 and three T-70 tanks and withdrew to the southwest, to the area of the state farm. Yurkina, where he took up defense, the headquarters of the brigade, the control company, the motorized rifle machine-gun battalion, the battery of anti-tank rifles and the medical platoon were concentrated there. The 1st tank battalion remained to the west, where it took up defensive positions.

"The enemy is stubbornly advancing along the railway from Kotelnikovo to Stalingrad," the commander continued. "Aksai, Abganerovo has been occupied, heavy fighting is going on for the 74th kilometer junction, next to which our brigade has taken up defenses. Rifle divisions and other units hastily arriving fail to delay his advance. The situation for our brigade was very difficult. The enemy is still very strong. Everything can be expected. His breakthrough is not excluded and to us, he can land troops. I order you to be ready to fight. Keep weapons and ammo with you at all times. It is necessary to increase vigilance, strengthen the guards. If possible, load the cars in case of a sudden departure. Pay attention to people. Know what they breathe. No wonder they hid flyers. I don't think that they can change the Motherland, but God bless

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saves. Look after subordinates, hold them in your hands. And now - to work!

The drivers of the transport platoon of the company were on flights almost all the time. They transported ammunition, fuel and lubricants, food from army and front-line warehouses to brigade units. They got a lot on the way, they were often attacked by enemy aircraft, they did not take hot food for days. They were more informed than others about the situation at the front and other events and willingly shared all the news. At dinner, there was only talk about the enemy rushing towards Stalingrad. Are you strong enough to hold him?

How are we going to fight back, doctor? Sasha asked and added, "Sergeant Major Kruglyakov has arrived from the location of the 2nd tank battalion. He said that at noon the Germans had taken control of the 74th kilometer siding and were moving in the direction of Tinguta station. They have a lot of tanks, motorcyclists with machine guns. Planes repeatedly bombed our troops. Yes, and we have heard explosions here all day. It's only calmed down a bit now.

"Tinguta station is only 30 kilometers from Stalingrad," Sargsyan said.

"If we go further along the railroad, then we will find ourselves in a sack," said Manko, "after all, Germans, Romanians and Italians are also coming north of us from the Don.

— Yes, they crossed the Don in the northwest and are heading for Stalingrad. Where did the Germans from the south come from? They captured Rostov, but Kotelnikovo is many hundreds of kilometers away. If only we had a map, they would sort it out somehow," I intervened.

- There is nothing to understand. And so clear. The Germans entered the Caucasus after Rostov. I know these places well. They, apparently, went far into the Caucasus, once they reached Kotelnikovo. In the North Caucasus there is a Tikhoretskaya station, from which there is a direct railway to Stalingrad through Remontnaya, Kotelnikovo and further north. And if they had gone south, they would have reached my Armenia. Well, Dela, - Sargsyan lamented.

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"Stalin will not allow the enemy to capture his city," I interjected authoritatively.

"The end of the war will be decided here. Either they will stop him and start beating him and driving him out of Russia, or we will be finished. If he takes Stalingrad, the road to Astrakhan and Baku will be opened to him. And he can go to Moscow and take her," Sargsyan concluded.

"I thought you were an intelligent person, but you are talking about our death," Manko intervened hotly, "what kind of Siberia do we have? Yes, and our Moscow and Leningrad are holding on. What kind of demise can we talk about? We will exterminate each other, and the one who has more people will win, and we have more.

"Who will live then," put in Gen, who had been silent until now, "who will remain there?" We will no longer be there when it comes to Siberia. All this, brothers, will be decided earlier and will be decided, perhaps, here. Maybe we will not live to see victory, many of us will not live - that's what the war is for, but I wonder how all this will happen? To live to the time when they start to drive him in the neck.

"In the meantime, it hangs around your neck." What are you thinking of doing?" asked Manko.

- That everyone will, then I will. Fight. Apparently, I don't have any of my relatives left. All lived in Kyiv. Jews. It is known that all of them were destroyed. I think that the Ukrainian wife and son were not spared. So there is no one to even mourn me.

Sargsyan spoke softly, penetratingly:

— The unfortunate Jewish people — a nation of martyrs and outcasts for many centuries after the deprivation of their historical homeland. The Nazis began coming to power by blaming the Jews for all the difficulties of the German nation and began to brutally persecute them: they were deprived of their jobs, their property was taken away, they were put to death in prisons. Most of them were expelled from Germany. During this war, the Nazis decided to exterminate the Jews not only in their own country, but also in the occupied countries, which they are doing," he sighed deeply and said: "The fate of the Jews, Armenians and many other peoples depends on

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whether the Soviet Union will stand in the fight against fascism or be defeated. If the German turns our peoples into a labor force, into slaves for himself, then he will destroy the Jews, as well as the Armenians, if not himself, then by the hands of the Turks, as already happened. Can destroy other peoples or part of them. We don't have anything

all that remains is how to fight and only fight together with Russia until victory! So you need to set up and subordinates. During the night, four tanks must be repaired and sent to the battalions. This is our job, and let's go do it," he got up and went to the workshops. Behind him began to rise and all rest.

Yes, talking won't make a difference. Let's go, - Gene also got up, caught up with his inseparable friend, and both left in the direction of the workshops.

And I took a sanitary bag and went to the shed, where wheeled vehicles were being repaired. At the opposite doors on the street I noticed a lively group of drivers and mechanics, among whom gesticulated foreman Kruglyakov, strongly knocked down, about thirty years old, somewhat above average height.

- What are you talking about?

- Yes, the foreman escaped from the hell, he tells a sad story.

- Miraculously survived. And my car is full of holes — the side is hooked, and the foreman has holes in the hood and cabin," one of the drivers said.

"Enough of antimony!" Just think, they scared me from above, - the voice of military technician Gena came from the open gates of the barn, - get to work! How many things!

Everyone began to disperse to their places: everyone was waiting for work.

I went to a permanent place for dressings - to the pit of the repair platoon, where there were more victims. There was also a place for dressings and other medical care near the kitchen in a primitive smoking room. The personnel gathered three times a day for meals. There have been no serious patients yet. Basic Demand

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was on the dressing material, and not only because of abrasions and bruises. A lot and because of boils on parts of the body rubbing against contaminated clothing.

Saturday, August 8, 1942 AT THE LINE OF ATTACK.

The gong called for breakfast. Soldiers came out of the repair sheds, working all night, in smeared overalls and uniforms. They threw everything off their waists, wiped parts of the body with rags soaked in gasoline, and then washed themselves with water from a barrel, which was filled the night before for firefighting needs. Some ran to the river - the Donskaya Tsaritsa, which flowed three hundred meters away. After breakfast, many of the repairmen immediately lay down by the bushes and fell asleep. Blows on the gong and the command to build up woke up with difficulty. At the divorce, the personnel were assigned to work. Half an hour of sleep was enough to clear my head

relieved heaviness and stiffness in the whole body.

The personnel of the company lined up near the pits. Lieutenant Colonel Ivanov spoke before the formation.

— Comrades! You did a good job that night, repaired a lot of equipment, and it has already left for its units. By the end of the day, all the remaining tanks to a single one, I repeat, by the end of the day, all tanks and wheeled vehicles must be repaired and depart under their own power to the units that have occupied their original lines. These vehicles are fully loaded with ammunition and fuel. Battalions are waiting for them.

The company commander set specific tasks for each repair group, each technician for the repair of vehicles and tanks. He appointed a group for the protection of the territory, allocated an observation post in case of a landing. Everyone dispersed to objects.

Before lunch, the company commander called me and ordered me to take everything necessary for rendering medical assistance, since I am going as part of the engineering and technical support group of the brigade to the combat area. Already had

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the commander of the military technician of the 3rd rank Voropaev, who will lead this group. The combat mission was assigned to us by Lieutenant Colonel Ivanov. The brigade, in cooperation with the 204th Infantry Division and other units, was to drive the enemy out of the 74th kilometer siding. Throw the enemy back from the Abganerovo-Tinguta railway leading to Stalingrad, and delay his advance until the arrival of reserve troops. During the fighting, our group was supposed to follow the 1st tank battalion, repair damaged vehicles directly on the battlefield, pulling them to shelters, and I was to provide medical care to the wounded and burned. The technical support group included two tractors, two repair battalions - for electrical equipment and weapons, two on-board vehicles with spare parts, two fuel trucks with diesel fuel, an on-board vehicle with barrels of gasoline. Letuchki are workshops equipped with lathes, milling machines, vices, welding, and tools.

The most experienced repairmen, who managed to prove themselves during these days, were selected from the personnel to the group. In addition to the senior group of Voropaev, commanders included a military technician of the 3rd rank Drozd, a specialist in the repair of tank engines, as well as Sergeant Korol, a squad leader. Foreman Kruglyakov headed the department for the repair of wheeled vehicles. The Red Army soldier Nagiba is an electric welder, Taras Kolesnik is a weapons master, Lieutenant Balashov is an electrical engineer, Sergeant Sinitsyn is an electrician, locksmiths and drivers. The group was directly subordinated to the deputy head of the brigade. Leaving part of the dressing material for the foreman of the company, I took with me all the rest of my belongings: a stretcher, a set of medicines and tools - a set of "PF", sets of bandages and splints, and loaded everything onto the driver Sasha Tsvetkov's tractor. He kept his sanitary bag with him.

The group received dry rations: crackers, canned food, porridge and soup in concentrates, dried potatoes, salt, sugar, tea.

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The drivers were ordered to rest - a night march was coming. Departure is scheduled immediately after dinner.

With the onset of darkness, we plunged and left in a southerly direction. Went without light. They were supposed to be guided by the brake lights of the cars in front, but a continuous veil of dust sharply worsened visibility and movement. Especially a lot of dust fell on our trailing tractor, and to fall behind means to get lost in the steppe. Everyone in the cars was asleep, so tired after the last tense days. Only the drivers behind the wheel and those sitting nearby were awake, so as not to let the drivers fall asleep. He led the column of the brigade's deputy chief technical officer along some landmarks known only to him. We walked slowly, stopping often. Ivanov circled the convoy many times, counting the cars. Even before dawn, we reached the positions of the 1st tank battalion northwest of the 74th kilometer siding. We already knew that to the right of us, in the area of the state farm. Yurkina, housed the 2nd tank and motorized rifle machine-gun battalion. The brigade's headquarters and management company, auxiliary units, and a medical platoon were also located there. The brigade was located in the combat formations of the 204th rifle division, © which was supposed to interact in battle. Ivanov and Voropaev left for the brigade headquarters to report on their arrival and to receive a combat mission. We were ordered to disperse, sit in cars and wait for instructions. All military units passed by us, some stopped and placed themselves nearby.

Sunday, August 9, 1942

Beginning to light up. We found ourselves in a hollow overgrown with bushes. In the haze of dawn, the silhouettes of dispersed tanks loomed, covered with camouflage nets, branches,



trucks special vehicles. The positions of artillery batteries, anti-aircraft installations, dug into the ground, became distinguishable. Between them wedged the newly arrived military units, military

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naya technique. The Red Army soldiers and commanders were scurrying around. A lot of military stuff accumulated in this area, which was such a convenient target for the enemy. The night was chilly, a little chilly. We got out of the cars, warmed up. We looked around. They overlaid the bushes with their "mines", adding them to those imposed before us.

Our group was still waiting for military equipment Voropaev. At this time, vehicles covered with tarpaulins drove up to the tanks. Submachine gunners from a motorized rifle machine-gun battalion arrived. They began to unload boxes with grenades and bottles of flammable liquid and mount them on the armor of the tanks, where they themselves were placed behind the turret of each tank, four to five people. They tied themselves to the brackets, the cover of the transmission hatch, so as not to fall off when moving or injured. Their task was to suppress the firing points and manpower of the enemy with automatic fire, grenades and bottles of flammable liquid when tanks broke through into his battle formations, thus contributing to the advancement of our infantry. The belief stuck in my mind that the tankers inside the vehicle were safely sheltered from bullets and shrapnel. And against this background, with all frankness, the defenselessness of machine gunners from above was sticking out.

Voropaev returned from the command post of the brigade and reported the situation:

"At any minute, our troops are expected to attack the siding, with the task of dislodging the enemy and throwing them away from the railway. The junction is less than half a kilometer from us. We are ordered to follow the 1st tank battalion, which is supposed to break through the enemy defenses. The 2nd battalion and motorized riflemen with the same task are operating on our right.

The battalion's deputy technical officer was wounded there, and military equipment of the 3rd rank Drozd was temporarily sent there.

Suddenly, the voices of loudspeakers from the location of the enemy broke into the disturbing silence of dawn. It was so unexpected that we were alert, holding our breath. [a loud, clear, barking voice, echoing around in pure Russian, ordered to stop

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cut resistance and voluntarily surrender to the German troops. Having previously destroyed all communists, commissars and Jews. The German command then guaranteed everyone to save their lives and return to their families at the end of the war, the outcome of which was already a foregone conclusion. It was heard from the loudspeakers that German troops had entered Stalingrad from the west, which had ceased resistance. The decisive assault on Moscow and Leningrad began, the days of which are numbered. The Red Army has been defeated. Further resistance is futile. Persistently and often repeated was the threat of the complete annihilation of all who did not cease resistance. All this had a terrifying, paralyzing effect, as if paralyzed. The end of each word echoed, splitting in the distance. Neither the bombing nor the shelling inspired such horror as this barking voice in the deathly silence. It was proposed to go out in groups and alone with personal weapons in the direction of the front edge, carrying in front of them a staff with any white material.

Against the background of the broadcast, single scattered volleys began to be heard. The artillery cannonade that finally exploded from our side drowned out, and then cut off the voices of the loudspeakers. Batteries and mortars fired. To the right of us, fiery streaks flew by, accompanied by a rather sonorous, whistling, unusual crackling sound, and had a terrible effect on the psyche, and stood out in this general cacophony of the sounds of shooting, explosions and fire. The realization that our rocket launchers were shooting like that evoked inner joy and delight. Above us, in the direction of the enemy, IL-2 attack aircraft flew in groups at a low altitude, and after a short time we heard stronger and more muffled explosions.

The enemy began to respond. Shells and mines began to burst in battle formations. We could hear short, frequent cannon shots and machine-gun shots, a sharp rumble of aircraft entering the peak and flying over us. By

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more powerful explosions of aerial bombs shook the ground around. We instinctively pressed ourselves into the ground, hoping to hide ourselves, but the ground was hard, dry, and did not yield to our efforts. We were covered in clods of earth. There were dead and wounded. Shouts were heard: "Paramedic! Nurse! A powerful roar of all tank engines burst into the rumble of cannonade at once. The tormented earth trembled.

All this was unusual, unnatural for human hearing, consciousness, existence. Not a single animal, not a single bird remained in these places - they left in advance, as if they foresaw some kind of natural disaster. It seemed that nothing more should surprise us, but the appearance of a large number of lizards rushing about on the parched, cracked earth drew attention. They must have taken the explosions of shells and bombs for an earthquake and jumped out of their holes to the surface. And what is it like for a person in these conditions? Is the psyche able to endure all this, not to mention the human body, which so defenselessly and in despair pressed against the hard, unyielding earth, seeking protection in it. And how can one not envy the lizards, who could hide themselves in any crevice?

Explosions of bombs, mines and shells, bullets and fire destroyed trees, structures, equipment - iron and steel, tore human bodies to shreds, perforated them or burned them, inflicting injuries on a healthy flowering organism, incompatible with life, or doomed for long-term torment and suffering. It was not a volcanic eruption, earthquake or other natural disaster that people experienced. They created all this hell themselves, for the destruction of their own kind. Is it for this purpose that man has risen above all life on earth in order to destroy himself and everything he has created? Why does the most intelligent of all living beings act so foolishly? Why do we have to lie here dirty, hungry, biting into the dry, hard earth, looking for salvation from a bullet, a fragment, fire - everything that brings death?

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When hell was invented and all the torments of sinners were crowned with a cauldron of boiling tar, then their imagination at that time, it must be said, was meager. The sinner was guilty of something, and hell became the retribution for sins. And what is the fault of our Soviet people, the people who have faced such trials, especially their soldiers? We did not conquer foreign lands, did not seize their wealth, did not interfere in the life and affairs of other peoples. It was invaders who came to us, destroyed our homes, killed relatives and friends, and turned the survivors into slaves ... No, it won't work! The payment for torment and suffering will be victory over a hated enemy. For many, this will cost their lives now, in minutes, hours, days and months, and maybe even years. For the sake of life and happiness of all who

stay alive.

Reality demanded action, and in response to cries for help, I got off the ground and began to crawl from one wounded man to another, bandaging them. All around us shells and mines were exploding, and we were showered with clods of earth.

Voropaev's team tore me away from the wounded: "By cars! Start up!" Everyone jumped up, shook off the sand and dust. I sat in the tractor and I. Our tanks with submachine gunners on armor moved out of their shelters, went out over the crest of the hollow and at high speed went in the direction of the siding through the passages marked with chips in the defensive lines. With pain in my heart, I watched the figurines of submachine gunners clinging to the turrets of tanks. I shared my thoughts with Voropaev.

— How can you surely doom people to death, placing them so openly?

"That is the order," Voropaev answered, "war is a complete risk. They expect to throw them and suppress the firing points and manpower of the enemy.

The motorized infantry followed the tanks. On the initial lines and on the front line of our troops, shells continued to burst, cars and tanks were on fire. There were already many wounded and killed in our battle formations. They were dealt with in the area of our offensive sector by the military

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ra and sanitary instructors of artillery batteries and infantry units and a military assistant of the 1st tank battalion, who followed his tanks as part of the technical support of the battalion. Fighting was already going on in the junction area.

We, the engineering and technical support group of the brigade, also moved along the steppe land plowed up by soldiers' shovels and shells. A fuel truck with diesel fuel and a car with barrels of gasoline were left in a hollow. A tractor moving ahead stopped, a Red Army soldier jumped out of it and stopped our vehicles. He ran up to me and shouted that one of the repairmen in the tractor was wounded or killed. I walked over to them. An elderly Red Army repairman of about forty-five was lying in the back of the car, covering the bloodied mass on his stomach with his hands. Loops of intestines protruded between the fingers from a tattered tunic. A large fragment of a shell or mine tore through the anterior wall of the abdominal cavity, and the intestines protruded into the resulting wound. The Red Army soldier was conscious. In the roar of battle, I heard his quiet voice: "So my time has come. I didn't have time to do anything... In the left pocket of my tunic there is a letter with an address. Add, so that the son takes care of his mother ... "I promised to finish and send the letter. He consoled him that they would mend his stomach and still be at war. At the same time, he tried to fill the prolapsed intestine into the wound with a hand in a glove treated with alcohol. But I didn't succeed. He stuffed a part, and another part of him protruded nearby. And this happened in full view of everyone, among the rags of a bloody tunic and underwear. He lay on the dirty, dusty floor of the tractor among the spare parts, on a piece of tarpaulin. It was not possible to fill the fallen out intestines into the wound. He put a bandage of several dressing bags over the wound and loops of the intestines, strengthened them with a towel and wrapped it all around the stomach and back with bandages. During the bandaging, he was conscious, asked to send a letter and regretted that he had not managed to bring any benefit, he had not even killed a single German, and he himself had to die. Made him

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morphine injection, he was carefully removed from the tractor on a cape and taken to the nearest collection point for the wounded. All of our vehicles were parked while he took care of the wounded. The tanks went far ahead. Voropaev hurried me on.

Finally, we followed the tracks of the past tanks. This was my first real wounded in combat. My hands were trembling, and before my eyes there was an unreducible intestine. Why didn't he go into the abdominal cavity? Did I do everything right? It was necessary to wash the intestinal loops with sterile warm saline solution, treat the wound surface before reduction. But what to do in such conditions? He would be delivered to a specialized medical institution in the next few hours, but this is practically impossible. I understood that such a wounded person would die in the next stages of evacuation. What haven't I done that I could have done for him? And what can I do for others in this hell?

We have already mastered what used to be a station - the 74th kilometer siding. The fighting took place east of the railway track or the place where the railway passed, because the rails with sleepers were twisted, scattered around and deformed. Almost all of the station buildings were destroyed and burned. The cars were parked behind the ruins of a long building made of dung blocks - a former coal warehouse.

On a section of a small road we had passed, there were wrecked and mangled vehicles, tanks, guns. Some of them were on fire. There were corpses, wounded. In pits, funnels, behind

wrecked cars — groups of the wounded and the doctors who provide them with medical care. We did not stop, because our task was to follow our tanks.

When we were walking along the enemy's defensive zone, an even more terrible picture of the youth of war appeared before our eyes. On the ground plowed up with shells and bombs lay warped, piled-up military equipment: tanks, guns, vehicles, military equipment.

There were especially many corpses in gray-green uniforms and dark gray helmets. Many, many corpses in various poses hung on the mangled equipment, lay under it, on the ground. Hitler would have to look at his warriors. Interspersed was our wrecked equipment. Everything burned and smoked. The nauseating smell of burnt human flesh. In some places there were collection points for the wounded, where our doctors worked. I did not meet any wounded Germans. I didn't see any prisoners here either.

A very stubborn battle was still going on not far away. The Germans offered strong resistance. One of our wrecked tanks stood at the railroad tracks. Two tankers fell out of the hatch and crawled towards us. Their hands and overalls were covered in blood, but they were not injured. It was reported that the turret of the tank was pierced through with a shell and the commander was lying in it. The car got stuck on an embankment, as one caterpillar was torn apart by a shell. One of them, stuttering, kept repeating:

— The commander is right through, right through the commander...

Voropaev gave a command to Sasha Tsvetkov, the driver of the tractor, to drag the tank from the embankment to the shelter. Together with two tankers, they hooked the tank with a cable, but it was not possible to tow it. It turned somewhat along the surviving caterpillar, and the rollers of the other side, on which the caterpillar was torn off, crashed into the ground. They bandaged the cable, and managed to drag it a little below the railway track, where it remained standing.

Not far away there was a battle, bullets were whistling around, shells were exploding. I tried to get into the vehicle through the landing hatch located under the tank to assist the commander, but I failed to do so, as the vehicle almost touched the solid ground. It was not possible to dig and open completely. I had to climb through the top hatch. And there was shooting all around. There was a tank battle, supported by motorized infantry and aircraft from both sides. Aircraft hunted for enemy tanks, bombed and fired from

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machine guns and cannons. It was visible how our tanks were moving and firing from the move or short stops.

I crawled through the hatch into the tank with a sanitary bag in my hands. With difficulty, he squeezed past the lifeless body. When he began to feel it with his hands, he stumbled on a liquid warm mess in the chest area. It was pierced through with a shell, as was the tank turret on both sides. I grabbed the body at the hips, tried to lift it to the hatch, all smeared with blood, but I could not push this lifeless body through the hatch of the tower. It fell on me and did not climb into the hatch. I had to tie him with sanitary straps, climb up through the hatch, but even then I alone could not get him out of the tank. His comrades climbed the tower and looked at me with fear. Apparently, my appearance was terrible, all smeared with blood. I asked them to help, and together they pulled out the bloodied, lifeless, still warm body of the commander. We carried him on a raincoat to a group of our dead soldiers lying nearby, covered with capes, which were taken care of by a special funeral team.

I crawled aside and began to wash my hands with water from a flask, but my tunic and trousers were covered in blood. My legs became cottony, something squeezed in the epigastric region, I felt sick. I knelt down and began to vomit, then sobbing, which I could not immediately stop. And I was very ashamed in front of my comrades for my spiritual weakness. Apparently, the nervous tension of the last days, my uniform smeared with blood and the dead body of a tankman had an effect.

Nobody reproached me for anything. Voropaev crawled up, patted his back, held out his flask of water. I took a few sips. It didn't get any better. Threw up again. someone brought me

a tunic and trousers without blood, which must have been taken from the corpse of a dead Red Army soldier. I changed immediately. Subsequently, the wounded and killed did not have such an impact. Communication with them has become professionally habitual, but not indifferent. Every

The smoke left some kind of trace in the soul, especially familiar with something before.

At this time, our repairmen replaced the broken tracks of the tank, pulled the tracks, and it became combat-ready again. Through two holes in the tower were not a hindrance. The tankers were subordinated to another commander. The battle went on non-stop all day. More and more units were pulled up and left for the steppe. Behind the coal warehouse, wrecked equipment accumulated, which was able to approach on its own. Tractors pulled something.

The car repairman foreman Kruglyakov was wounded in the soft tissues of the thigh. I bandaged him, but he refused to leave the front line, and I left him for the time being in one of the battalions. The car mechanic Kobzev was seriously wounded in the chest, and he was sent to the medical platoon.

In the afternoon, a fierce counterattack by the enemy began. After a massive air raid, a group of enemy tanks, accompanied by motorized infantry, broke through and pushed our troops back to the very track of the railway. The tanks remaining on the move, vehicles with submachine gunners, withdrew. They took up defense at the railroad tracks. The vehicles remaining in the steppe and the infantry continued to fight southeast of the siding, sometimes taking up all-round defense.

Subdivisions of the 204th Infantry Division also stubbornly defended themselves. Great damage was inflicted on the enemy by the "Peters" - they knocked out a lot of the enemy's equipment.

Our maintenance team remained behind the wreckage of the coal depot and continued to repair the damaged equipment. Some of the vehicles were repaired directly on the battlefield. I helped the wounded and burned. By the end of the day, there were two more furious attacks by the enemy, who tried to dislodge our troops from the western part of the siding, but all attacks were repulsed. An electric welder, a Red Army soldier Nagiba, was shell-shocked. He almost did not hear anything, but he refused to leave for the medical platoon, and continued to repair tanks with his comrades.

Not far from our location, the military paramedic of the 1st tank battalion set up a medical station, where I also helped him to provide assistance to the wounded, preparing for evacuation. The point was located in an open area near a small hollow near a dilapidated building with a collapsed roof. There are stretchers, boxes with dressings on the site. Next to the wall is an ambulance. Most of the wounded lay on the ground on a large stretched tarpaulin - an awning from a tank. We were bombarded with sand, gravel, coal dust. To some were added new wounds from shells and mines exploding nearby. We did dressings, applied splints, tourniquets. The wounded came not only from the tank battalion, but also from the infantry units of the 204th rifle division and the Zhitomir cadet regiment, which occupied the defense to the left of us, on the northwestern outskirts of the siding. The cadet regiment suffered heavy losses at dawn before the attack from enemy artillery. Many cadets were lost at noon from enemy bombs when the enemy tried to retake the siding. Some of the wounded cadets were sent to the medical centers of the 204th Infantry Division. An ambulance cruised from us to the medical platoon. The wounded were also sent in transport vehicles heading for ammunition and fuel. The ambulances did not return as we were promised. Apparently, they were overloaded with the transportation of the wounded to medical institutions. By the end of the day there were two more furious attacks by the enemy with air support. He tried to drive us out of the western part of the siding, but all attacks were repulsed.

I was told that there were dead and wounded in the area of the repair group. I ran to them. A terrible picture appeared before me. A bomb hit one of the tractors and knocked it over on its side. The driver is killed. The locksmith and the driver of the side car were killed. An electrician, sergeant Sinitsyn, was wounded in the shoulder. Infantry units suffered heavy losses. The wounded were taken to the collection point, where a medical officer worked - a girl and two orderlies. I joined them on

for some time there was a large influx of wounded, then he took sergeant Sinitsyn to the BMP of the 1st tank battalion, from where he was evacuated along with others to the medical platoon of the brigade. Many wounded and burned tankers ended up in the medical units of other units and formations and were evacuated to army field medical institutions, bypassing our medical platoon. They were listed as missing.

With the onset of darkness, the fighting subsided on both sides. They pulled up damaged cars, picked up the wounded and the dead. Fresh parts of the rifle division approached and occupied the defense. The survivors from our technical support group gathered in one place behind Sasha Tsvetkov's tractor in a small hollow. They laid a tarpaulin on the ground, sat down. No one wanted to sleep, and no one would have dared in this situation. We knew that everything would start again, perhaps from one hour to the next. I was very thirsty, my throat was dry. From the first-aid post of the 1st battalion he brought two pots of water. Soaked crackers and gnawed them. I wanted to eat something hot. Packs of concentrates, cereals, tea leaves, sugar - all this was there, but they did not dare to make a fire. Breadcrumbs gnawed. At midnight, finally, they found and dragged the kitchen of the 1st tank battalion with still warm porridge in the cauldron and hot tea. To the credit of the business executives, they were ready to feed people even during the day, but the situation did not allow it. When we saw the kitchen, we felt hungry. No matter how tense they were, the opportunity to eat stirred up everyone, encouraged them. Those who could walk grabbed their bowls and moved to the kitchen. They also fed the wounded. The porridge remained—many eaters were missing.

A late dinner completely exhausted people, and they felt incredibly tired, they began to feel sleepy, and snoring immediately began to be heard. Voropaev's team: "Get up! There's work to be done!" brought everyone back to reality. He came from the battalion commander and said that there were two under

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broken tanks and they need to be restored by morning. Several wheeled machines.

The repairmen got up, divided into groups and moved to their objects. Their hands were bloodied, covered in cuts and wounds. He wrapped them in bandages, and people continued to work.

One of the locksmiths handed me an elegant flat box containing a number of tools: scissors, tweezers, tweezers, nail files, and more.

Take it, doctor. Some kind of delicate instrument. Maybe it'll come in handy. It's useless to me in plumbing. I got it in German trash.

I watched. This is not a medical instrument, as I presented it. Items with delicate plastic handles are placed in an elegant box lined with blue velvet. In all likelihood, it could have been a nail cleaning kit. I have never seen them before. But it could be him. He thanked and took it, maybe for what it will come in handy.

Monday, August 10, 1942 COUNTERSTRIKING SUCCESSFUL.

After midnight, the 204th Rifle Division brought up fresh forces - infantry drove up and hid in vehicles, "Petee" soldiers with rifles on their shoulders passed by, carrying boxes of cartridges on their backs. An artillery battery was located not far away. Our tanks of the 1st battalion, which remained on the move, also occupied the starting lines, this time without submachine gunners. Few of them stayed in alive.

Even in the starry sky at dawn, our troops launched a counterattack. A massive shelling of the eastern part of the siding began, then the fire was moved deep into the enemy defenses. There was a return shelling of our positions from the enemy. Shells and mines exploded all around. The wounded and the dead appeared again. Our stormtroopers passed overhead, and soon they heard how they were bombed. The tank engines hummed and the vehicles moved

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forward. The pace of the battle increased, our tanks with battles went further and further to the east, followed by motorized infantry. There was still a skirmish to the north and east of the siding - the infantrymen were finishing off the enemy. Near the station were scattered gun mounts, enemy tanks and several of our tanks. In the distance, in the steppe, one could see frozen and burning German tanks in greater numbers than on the eve of the first day of the battle, and more than ours stood and burned. It became obvious that the enemy had been thrown back from the junction far to the southeast.

Another repairman was killed in the group. He sent foreman Kruglyakov to the medical platoon, who had been wounded in the thigh the day before. He promised to pick him up after treating the wound.

At noon, the brigade's chief technical officer arrived and reported that the enemy had been driven back across the Aksai River, where ours had taken up defensive positions at the previous line. The deputy head of the brigade ordered me to go to the village of Zeta, where our technical support company and the brigade's warehouses are located. Said the Zetas were bombing and there were dead and wounded among our repairmen. Medical workers from neighboring units helped in providing assistance. The seriously wounded were sent to Tundutovo, and he ordered me to deal with the rest. There are no health workers around right now.

The remnants of the brigade retreat to the state farm. Yurkina, where they occupy the defense and put themselves in order. Only 10 serviceable tanks and less than half of the personnel remained in service. The machine-gun battalion suffered particularly heavy losses.

We left for the Zetas in a GAZ-51 flatbed car. The repairman Ozheshko went with me to get spare parts and products for the repair group. Captured the wounded tankers to the medical platoon, located in the state farm named after Yurkin, to which we had to make a small detour to the side. Yes, and I needed to replenish dressings, medicines, and I wanted to see someone. He put one of the wounded in the cockpit. I got into the back of the car next to Ozheshko. He shared his worries with me. He left six children at home. How without

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breadwinner will live? True, his wife learned the elements of his profession - a tinsmith. Can tinker, solder. This work is always enough. But how they would grow up without a father worried him.

Why are you burying yourself so early? Go back to your children, I assured him.

- From such hell, I feel, do not escape. There will be death to the damned, they will not let him go further. There is nowhere further, but we will all lie tight. Maybe, with rare exceptions, but few of us will remain. The outcome of the war will be decided here," he thought and added: "We won't retreat any more.

This is how our very simple man, illiterate, but worldly wise, thought and spoke with conviction. He believed that he might not survive, but he believed in the victory of the people.

- I have a mother with four children somewhere loitering in the evacuation ... without a father. He's at the front. How can she pull them out? I shared my pain. - Almost illiterate, without a profession and small children.

Each one's own burden seemed heavier than the others. But she was unbearable for everyone.

We got to talk to the state farm. The medical platoon was located in the yard, enclosed by a solid fence. In the garden, the wounded were lying on canvas and on the grass by the trees. Some were loaded into an ambulance, and lighter ones were loaded into a transport vehicle for evacuation.

I got everything I needed from Shepshelev. This time he did not skimp, although he grumbled that he had little money left. The commander of the medical platoon, military doctor of the 3rd rank Gasan-Zade, doctors Lozhkin, Weinstein, paramedics, nurses were busy with the wounded, preparing them for evacuation. Everyone was worried, tired, in soiled bathrobes with traces of blood, iodine, rivanol.

Maya Weinstein approached me.

- I'm glad to see you in good health. How are you? Is it calm in the Zetas?

- It's calm there.

What the hell are we in!

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— I was at the junction of the 74th kilometer with a group of repairmen. It was worse than hell. And the Zetas bombed, there are dead and wounded. I'm going there.

In front of me stood a frail female girl in an exorbitantly long dressing gown, stained with iodine and blood, over a tunic with sleeves turned up to the elbows, with an unbuttoned collar, trimmed on the inside with a white, no longer fresh collar, in soldier's cotton trousers tucked into tarpaulin boots. It was hot. It was hot and stuffy. Someone else remembered her.

- Where is your hair? I asked confused. That's it. Those lush black hair, collected in a ball at the back, on which the forage cap sat so dapper, is no longer there.

— Cut off, interfered with, it became impossible to take care of them. What, I look really bad? she thought to herself, and then added: - If the head is whole, it will grow back before the wedding.

She asked anxiously:

Will we get out of this nightmare? Again it will come...

- We must get out! They say that great forces of ours are approaching. But the fights will be fierce. I need to run. See you Maya! Can you do that?

"Of course, what is it?"

I walked away a few steps, quickly returned and said to her:

"Don't leave, I'll leave something for you to remember," and he ran to the car. He took out a duffel bag, untied it, pulled out a case and ran to her.

- It is for you.

- What is this?

I opened.

- Should be suitable for cleaning nails.

- What a charm! This is a manicure set. How luxurious! [Where did you get it?

— Robbed an Aryan princess. I realized that it suits you better.

- Thank you, joker!

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- Get out of the nightmare and live to see the wedding, you will definitely live and everything will be fine with you,

- I shouted, already moving away.

She stood still, clutching the case to her breast with both hands, and looked after him. I waved my hand already from a distance and lost sight of it. And I thought - maybe for the first time in all this nightmarish



a week — that I, too, would have to get out of this nightmare if Maya got out. But why do I need her?

From the state farm. Yurkina left in the direction of Zeta. At the exit I met an ambulance with a red cross and near it a military assistant of the motorized rifle machine-gun battalion Modzelevsky. He was also returning from the medical platoon, where he brought the wounded from the battalion. Its driver mounted the wheel of the car. Lenya looked like a hero: tall, broad in the shoulders, slender. Always with a smile - a good-natured big man. I left a pleasant impression from previous meetings with him. He seemed to be always happy to meet. When I found out that I was going to the Zetas, I said that I definitely need to stop by on the way to him. His battalion is a few kilometers away. Not listening to objections, he put me into the cab of a lorry, squeezed himself in beside him, shouted to his driver to follow us and took me to him. Their battalion medical center was curtailed. Everything was ready for the march.

Panchenko, the doctor of the machine-gun battalion, warmly greeted me—a slightly plump, stocky woman, of medium height, in her thirties. They organized dinner in an ambulance that approached them. We drank some alcohol for the meeting. They fed us hot porridge, drank tea with breadcrumbs. And they have crackers. I haven't seen bread in recent weeks. They shared their impressions of the battles that took place. According to the available incomplete data, they had hardly a quarter of their people and equipment left. Most of the machine gunners who were located on the armor during the battles died. Many also died in vehicles following the tanks during the attacks and pursuit of the enemy.

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They mourned the losses, said goodbye warmly, wished them success in battle and meetings at the next stages. I managed to notice from the glances and touches that not only collegiate relations were established between Modzelevsky and Panchenko. In my heart I wished them well. Arrived in the Zetas late in the evening.

Tuesday, August 11, 1942 THE ENEMY HAS BEEN STOPPED.

On the morning of August 10, the Germans bombed the Zetas. We had two transport vehicles blown up. One bomb hit near the edge of a large barn where the workshops of the repair platoon were located, several fell not far from the location of the company. More than a dozen exploded in the village. The dead from the personnel were buried on the outskirts of Zeta, not far from the repair shops. Some of the wounded were taken to Tundutovo. The lightly wounded were left in the company. I took care of them. Made dressings, dealt with the sick. The paramedic came, a Kalmyk woman, the only remaining medical worker in the entire village of Zeta. Most of the medical workers of the local hospital last year were mobilized and sent to the front, and the rest were drafted into the militia and sent to Stalingrad. Few of the local Kalmyk residents left.

Among the civilian population were killed and more than a dozen wounded. There was nowhere to send them, and relatives did not dare to set off from their native places. The hospital was empty. The wounded were in their homes. They were served by a nurse.

They moved from house to house. The wounded were mostly women and children. For some reason, fate spared the men. They worked in the field or in the yard and managed to hide in shelters. The child did not go out of my memory - a girl of about five years old with a shrapnel wound in the area of the soft tissues of the thigh and a more extensive one - the lower leg with bone damage. For all the time during which they did the dressing and put a splint on the leg, the girl endured pain, just as restrained, without increasing voices, sobbed, but did not cry,

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I allowed myself to do everything. What else will happen to the leg, how will the wound healing go? In the hospital would be her. But where to take her and many other wounded? Why are they being tested like this? What is the fault of the child, women? The occupiers must be punished for the suffering of our people. All this is seen called for retribution.

Some data on the losses of the tank brigade during these last two days of fighting in the area of the 74th km siding became known. Very few tankers survived without vehicles. Most of them died or were wounded and burned and ended up in field medical institutions of other units and formations. In the motorized rifle machine-gun battalion of the brigade, only submachine gunners remained in the ranks less than a quarter. The chief of staff of the brigade, Major Malikov, was mortally wounded. Captain Kalinin was appointed instead of him.

At the cost of the lives of most of the people of the brigade and other units and formations, it was possible for the time being to delay the enemy's advance from the south to Stalingrad. The enemy suffered heavy losses in manpower and equipment and went over to the defensive.

Wednesday, August 12, 1942 I MAKE MY LIFE COMPLICATED.

It's time for lunch. Went to the kitchen area. You need to take a sample, look at the products. The sergeant-major received fresh meat from the brigade warehouse during these last days. They were issued for one day from the payroll of the personnel and attached, standing in the company on allowance. They brought the meat in the evening for delivery the next day. They did not dare to take it for more than one day, because the weather was quite warm during the day, and there was nowhere to store it. I wanted to eat fresh meat, which I had not seen for almost a month. How much will it get per person. Consider that there are about one hundred and seventy people on allowance. For lunch, one hundred grams per person. It's eighteen kilos. Half bones. In the morning he advised the cooks to boil the meat with bones in a cauldron and cook soup in the meat broth, and put finely chopped meat pulp into the porridge. You should get a delicious soup and porridge. So they obesh

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whether to do. Near the kitchen, two baking sheets stood on bricks. The coals were still smoldering beneath them.

"So what's hot in there?"

"Look if you like.

- Why are you talking to me on "you" when I'm talking to you on "you"?

- You are still very young, and I can be on "you" ...

- In the army, it is supposed to refer to "you." So what's fried in there?

- Potatoes and meat.

Who is this for?

"For the commander, his deputy chief, political instructor, special officer, foreman of the company, I will try, Shikhalev, and you can eat.

- I warn you again - it's supposed to be addressed to "you". Something very brave these days, while I was not here.

He had some impudence in his behavior, but I did not tell him about it.

- Open the lids, show what's there.

He removed the lids with a wire hook.

Where are the fresh potatoes from?

- The foreman brought it and said: only for the commander and his deputies.

On another baking sheet, meat, cut into small pieces, was fried - the flesh itself.

- There will be three kilograms of meat here, what is left for all the others?

- What was left, put in porridge.

"Please, comrade Kharitonov, put the meat from the pan into a cauldron with porridge, and let everyone eat from the common cauldron. Now move the meat. Do it! As for potatoes, I'll find out if it's given out to everyone, then add fried potatoes to the soup. Soup won't go bad with fresh fried potatoes. So follow my order.

- You will get from the commander. Oh, how it fits. I warn you!

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I have nowhere to retreat. Moreover, the Red Army began to gather and listen to our skirmish. I knew that big troubles awaited me from the commander. He did not favor me anyway, and now I will acquire an enemy in his face. But after all the events experienced at the crossing, after having seen enough of the suffering and torment of soldiers there, in the heat of war, and here, in the Zetas, among the civilian population, it seemed to me that it became indifferent to how he would react to my act, and I could no longer do otherwise. Some voice whispered to me: "Find a convenient excuse to leave the kitchen, let it stay as it is, don't run into conflict." And the other forced to stick to the decision.

- Once again I ask you to follow my order: immediately put all the meat from the pan into the cauldron if you want to work as a cook.

"We'll see who's left to work," Kharitonov said and added, "I'll go and report to the commander."

- I am responsible for the nutrition of the personnel. Last order!

Clearly, there was determination and perseverance in his voice at high notes, from which there would be no retreat, and it came to him. He looked at me, shrugged, began to look around, fixed his eyes on the second cook, who stood bewildered at the hood with a drooping trembling jaw and for the whole time did not utter a single word, as if something was stuck in his throat.

"I don't care, I'm a soldier, I don't care. - He wiped his dry hands on his apron, put his right hand to his ear and said: - There is to follow the order!

He picked up a baking sheet and overturned all its contents into the cauldron, and threw the baking sheet on the grass.

- Fulfilled your order. Are you satisfied now? Rejoice, but you will also cry.

His gaze expressed anger. First time I've seen him like this.

"Stop it, Comrade Kharitonov!"

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"What will it be, what will be, oh, what will be?" Shikhalev began to lament.

There were already quite a few Red Army soldiers standing around, commanders - they came for dinner. They stood silently. I didn't see anyone, I didn't look into anyone's eyes, but I felt approval on the back of my head, on my back. Did you want to become famous in front of the staff? After arriving from the junction, they already looked at me with different eyes. They looked at him as his equal, who, on an equal basis with others, endures all the hardships of war and does his own thing, necessary for everyone else. For the first time I felt respectful attitude of people towards me, I felt that people trust me and hope that in

I will help you in the right moment, I will provide the necessary assistance. And I could not justify their faith in me. So maybe that's what I did. And I was happy with my act as a feat of arms.

Dinner is ready, many have gathered around the kitchen. You can't hear the usual replicas, hubbub. No one was in a hurry to give out dinner. They stood and waited.

"Let me taste the cooked food," I turned to Kharitonov. - Enough salt, cereals, dried potatoes boiled soft. Fat and tomato paste were not included. Add a dressing.

— Shikhalev! Fill the soup, - Kharitonov shouted to the assistant, and he himself went to the cauldron with porridge.

The second dish seemed very tasty to me. With these few spoons I decided to limit my dinner. I looked at Shikhalev's work. He put tomato paste in a saucepan, poured in vegetable oil, evident from the norm that was received for dinner, added a little thin soup from the cauldron, stirred it, and poured everything back into the cauldron where the soup was simmering. I had to boil it all, but I have not made any comments about it at the moment.

"I authorize the distribution of food," I said officially and went to the platoon's shed, where my medical corner was.

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He took the stretcher out of the barn, put it under the bushes and lay down. My thoughts were interrupted by the voice of a Red Army soldier:

— Comrade doctor, the commander is calling for you. Barely found you.

- Where is he?

— In my car.

- I'm going now.

What is waiting for me? If he starts yelling, then I will answer with impudence, I will say everything that I think about him, I will say that it is not fair to take crumbs from the Red Army soldiers and commanders, that everyone lives the same life, is equally exposed to danger and the legal food standards should be the same for everyone. Dinner was ending near the kitchen, the bowls were washed, and they parted. He climbed the ladder, entered the commander's flight room and reported that he had arrived at his call.

"Commissar, I ask you and Kalmykov to leave us.

They got out of the car. The commander looked at me for a long time, then asked, oddly enough, very calmly:

— Do you know your duties, what are you, as a medical assistant, supposed to do according to the charter?

- What do you mean specifically?

What are you supposed to do in the company?

- List the points of the charter?

Why are you minding your own business?

What was none of my business?

And here it broke:

— What is your damn business what they cook for the commander to eat? Your job is to feed the Red Army. Show yourself there. I forbid you to stick your nose into the commander's spoon. This is indecent and low! I decided to earn glory for myself by undermining my authority. I'll send it to one of our battalions. There and win glory for yourself under the bullets, and not in the kitchen.

"I was already there, as you can see, I'm back. From a bullet and a fragment, and here no one is safe.

Then I exploded:

— A shameful conversation started, comrade commander. How can you do such things at this time?!

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"You want to teach me, boy?" Be silent!

— No! This should not be allowed, and I intervened, here. What did I do wrong?

"I look at you and think: are you pretending to be a fool or are you really like that? OK Go. Sergeant Nikolaev came to me.

I turned and left. Again I went to the transport shed and lay down on the stretcher, belly down, considering whether I had done the right thing. And how would it be right? Who to ask? Who to consult? Manko brought me out of my thoughts. He held two bowlers in his hands and handed them to me. One had soup, the other had porridge and two crackers on top.

Eat and then you will think.

I did not want to eat, but I could not neglect his concern. I sat on a stretcher. He took out a spoon from behind the shaft, crumbled and soaked crackers in the soup and began to eat. The one who brought the food spoke more than words.

"That's where they hid!" Have you decided to cry? What are you upset about? You've given us a good dinner just now, doctor. Soup with croutons with fried potatoes and porridge with fried meat. I know everything, they told me how you fought in the kitchen. Well done! - He sat down on the grass, bending his legs under him in the east, military engineer Sargsyan.

"I wonder," he continued, "after the war there will be scoundrels left?" - and answered himself: - Maybe even more than honest ones. Scoundrels survive better than honest ones. [yen, tell me, do you think there will be scoundrels after the war? - he turned to the approaching Gene.

- You are solving a difficult problem, then you thought about it.

"You'll think about it when your own people are pecking for nothing," Manko, who had been silent until then, began to speak. - Titov revolts me most of all. Vin, no matter what, is a commissar, but grazes near the commander and blows the same tune. Don't tell him what's what.

Is he his own enemy?

"And the cause for which he is there?"

- The commissar will not go against the commander - it's more expensive for himself. You can't find fault with the commander at work - he tries, but he is a grabber.

"It's up to the commissar to reason with him. That's why he's a commissioner.

But you can't leave it like that either.

- What do you propose to do?

- The commander is the owner. You can't argue against him.

"Aya is not the master, are you and all the other slaves or sheep?" - Sargsyan boiled. - Tell me, Manko! Tell me straight. Should they feed separately from us? Tell Gen and all of us. Tell!

- I interpret the same thing. Sasha wags his tail, but he himself thinks the same. The commander is the owner. You are a party member and Sargsyan is a party member. Commander and Commissar-Party. So you tell him.

- Shame the commander! - exploded [en. He won't change his nature.

"If only there was one more, otherwise such a crowd is feeding around: the commissar, Kalmykov, the foreman, the storekeeper, cooks and various others," I said.

"I think it is necessary to talk to the commissioner," said Sargsyan. "The doctor gave us a good lesson and the commander as well. We must use them. I will speak to the commissioner. You can't miss the moment. You will be ashamed of yourself.

- God help you.

We can do without God. What left the answer to my question? Answer Sasha.

- What are you talking about?

Will there be scoundrels after the war?

- Should not be. Whoever survives will be attentive and considerate to others, will respect each other, share everything. After all, there will be so few people left who will survive this terrible time. There shouldn't be scoundrels.

- No. There will be scoundrels. If they grab themselves now, then after the war, wherever they work, they will also grab themselves, take care of themselves at the expense of others. Such a breed does not die, but quickly breeds if it is not cut to the root.

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- It will not be possible to cut down with a root. It's been that way all my life. Whatever you graze near, that's what you'll pick up," Manko spoke in proverbs, "whether a storekeeper, a cook, or a boss, he won't offend himself. What he touches with his hands sticks to his hands.

"You are spreading kulak philosophy, everything must change after the war.

- This is after the war. Now how can we help the doctor? What did the commander tell you?

- He said that he would kick out of the company. I think that he will achieve this.

- He's not such a bad person. In a rush, maybe he said. Strict, demanding. It is impossible without this. Yes, by the way, and you, doctor, he presented to the government award after the departure. The team was from the headquarters of the brigade, and they, with the commissar and Kalmykov, quickly put together the lists," Gen said.

— Who else did they introduce, Sasha? Manko asked.

- Voropaev compiled a list of those who participated in the battle in the junction area. He included the doctor, Korol, Tsvetkov, Nagiba, Kruglyakov, and several other repairmen. And I don't know who from the company was included. All this was done in secret. Award sheets were written by Mezentsev, but he does not speak. He was ordered not to spread. This was done in secret.

- God bless them, they are alive - this is the best order. Let's go to the workshops.

- Yes, we stayed too long, let's go.

We all went to the personnel in the workshops. Sasha Gen came up to me, held me until everyone moved away, and said:

- You're burrowing in vain. You are becoming a hindrance to the commander.

- What am I getting into?

"How can I tell you, don't contradict him. You are only harming yourself.

I said nothing. How to behave?

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"You see," Gen continued, "he nevertheless presented you for an award, although he might not have included you in the lists. And after this incident, he will survive you from the company, he will not forgive you. I understand you, but is it worth ruining your life? He will try to get rid of you. And we are used to you.

— No, Sasha, I can't apologize. I can not! Yes, I didn't do anything wrong. This is my job.

- Don't be naive. Don't contradict him, Fuck him.

We approached the barn and stopped talking. They were already accustomed to the fact that before lunch or dinner, and often after and towards the end of work, if the end was expected, I did dressings. And this time I deployed my "PF", and soldiers began to approach me for dressings. Sergeant Nikolaev found me here by chance. Apparently he was looking for me.

Doctor, we need to talk. Let's go a little.

I finished dressing, closed the kit, and we left the workshop.

"What happened, sergeant major?" I asked.

- I'm fine, you're not right. Forgive me for pointing out, but listen.

Have you decided to teach?

- Listen to me, please. Why are you asking for trouble with the commander? Why are you making life difficult for yourself? The commander is the master of the situation, and not you to him, but he can ruin everything for you.

"What do you mean, sergeant major?" I pretended to be a stranger.

- Why did they throw meat and potatoes into a common cauldron? It was I who ordered that he be prepared separately. I give out products for this in excess of the norm, not at the expense of soldiers and commanders.

Do you have your own products? Stocks, surplus? Where?

- It's my business. I won't tear myself away from the soldier's norm.

- In addition to the commander, Kharitonov prepared for eight more people. What right do they have to improved nutrition? Embarrassed in front of others.

- Kharitonov has already gone too far. From now on, I will allocate additional food only for the commander, commissar, and Kalmykov. They live together and eat together. I myself will see to it that others are not fed.

I said nothing. Indeed, if the commander does not object, and perhaps even orders him to cook separately, is it right for me to intervene? What can I do but hurt myself.

But on the other hand, about a fifth of the meat from the common cauldron should be given to the commander and his freeloaders - this must be a conscience. And if he gives additional products in excess of the norm, then let them cook. How to explain to people? They see everything. You will not begin to explain what is prepared from additional products. And where will the foreman get additional products from? All the same, he will steal from the Red Army ration.

"I see that you are very naive, doctor, you have no worldly experience," the foreman interrupted my thoughts, "the war is on, is it worth thinking about such trifles?" Yes, and the war will write off everything, doctor.

- A person lives among people, foreman, and in any situation everything should be humane. Especially in the war, there are so many in an animal way. This is how I understand life, although you are right that I really do not have any worldly experience.

, - Life will teach, how it will teach! concluded the foreman. - I have to go. - saluted my naivety, turned around and left.

Thursday, August 13, 1942 NEWSPAPERS AND BREAD.

The last two days in the disposition of the units of the brigade was relatively calm. Everyone understood that the Calm was temporary, that the main battles were ahead. Both sides prepared for even more violent battles. Our troops will hold defensive lines by any

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means, stand to the death. We were ordered to retreat, but the enemy did not abandon his goals either. And both sides were preparing for a decisive battle.

Eleven tanks remained in service in the brigade.

Before dinner, newspapers were brought in, for the first time in two weeks. The last time they read it was on the way at the Povorino station. Of the central ones was Krasnaya Zvezda, the South-Eastern Front - Stalingrad Banner and Za Rodinu - the newspaper of the 64th Army. People eagerly began to read them, looking for answers to many tormenting questions: about the state of affairs on our front, on other fronts, the country as a whole, but they only cited episodes from the life of parts of the army and the front, about the exploits of soldiers. There were notes in the newspapers about the selfless work of our people in the rear in harvesting and producing military products for the front. No one has received letters yet. People eagerly awaited news from their families. Many did not know where the family, relatives, whether they managed to evacuate from the territory occupied by the enemy.

As early as the first week after the war began, my father was appointed commissar of an extermination battalion of local activists. He is a party member. I was enrolled at the Leningrad Military Medical School even before the war and came on vacation before the start of classes in Kalinkovichi, where we lived. There the war found me. In the first days of the war, trains with evacuees passed, and with great difficulty, my father and I put a mother with four children there. And on the same day he left for Leningrad. My father stayed with the fighter battalion in Kalinkovichi. And so our family fell apart. We agreed to write everything to Aunt Faina in Leningrad, and she will already tell us who is where. They didn't think of anything else.

After dinner, the company's political instructor, Senior Lieutenant Titov, gathered all the personnel on the lawn near the kitchen and read to everyone Ilya Ehrenburg's article published in Krasnaya Zvezda. The commissar read about the atrocities committed by the Germans against our people. His actions called for revenge. No mercy for him! The article convinced that the enemy would be defeated, but exceptional tension was also required from each

and selflessness. Call: "Kill the German!" was perceived as a call to protect their relatives and friends, their homeland.



Friday, August 14, 1942 DOCTOR MAYA.

Last night I rested with the Kalmyks in the house, where they assigned me a place for a medical station. The hostess greeted me warmly. She treated me to dairy products, but I refused - I was afraid that the womb would not withstand the unusual food. I drank tea with cakes. She made a bed for me on a couch in the room reserved for receiving patients. Clean sheets, pillow, blanket. I stripped down to my underwear and fell somewhere into the abyss...

Woke up late in the morning. When I arrived at the location of the company, breakfast was already being distributed. The extradition was allowed by the foreman of the company Nikolaev. Some people have already received breakfast. There was noise around the kitchen, swearing, people spitting. It turned out that millet porridge was with sand, with a lot of sand. I tasted the porridge and spat it out. He spat several times, and the crunch of sand still remained on his teeth. I had to rinse my mouth with water. Such porridge, of course, could not be eaten, and I forbade giving it to the personnel. How to be now? People need to be fed. It was a pity for the stew, which was seasoned with porridge, it was transferred in vain, but to hell with it. People were waiting for breakfast. How to be? Shikhalev asked:

- How did the sand get into the porridge?

He shrugged his shoulders, blinked his eyes and said nothing.

Why is there sand in the porridge? Where did you get water?

There was no answer.

I reported the incident to the commander. He blamed me for everything. Like, I have to be present at the intake of water And the laying of products in the boiler.

"You didn't follow my order to control and be responsible for people's food. Put on trial?" the commander raised his voice.

— I didn't cook the porridge. It is not my duty to sit in the kitchen for days. Chefs need to be changed, since they are so irresponsible and unscrupulous.

- You need to be chased. In the meantime, I will order you to recover the cost of breakfast. Send me the foreman of the company and the cook who cooked. Go!

I went out.

The company commander ordered that breakfast be given out in dry rations: canned fish, crackers. Later, I found out that there was a queue at the checked well, and Shikhalev did not wait, went to another well, a shallow one, and poured water and sand into the boilers. Didn't notice at night.

I learned that a car was to go from the company to the brigade headquarters. I decided at the last minute to apply to the commander for permission to go to the medical platoon for dressings, and he allowed me without a word, just waved his hand. I just managed to jump into the back, and the car sped us off

to the steppe

A few hours later they arrived at the state farm. Yurka-on. They dropped me off at the medical platoon and promised to call before leaving. I went to look for Shepsholev, the head of the pharmacy, and met Dr. Lozhkina. I said hello, tried to joke, but she, who was always attentive to me, this time reacted completely indifferently, as if she were completely a stranger. She was preoccupied with something, or some misfortune befell. For me it came as a surprise.

- Where can I find Shepsholev?

"I'm his watchman, or something," she answered irritably.

Unpleasantly cut her attitude, and I went to look for the head of the pharmacy. Found.

- Hi colleague! - He shook hands. — I came to get dressings, some medicines, alcohol. How to organize it quickly?

- Write an application.

I sat down to write an application and shared with him:

- Something harsh today, Dr. Lozhkina. What happened to her?

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- She got married. Weighs whether it is good or bad.

- How did you get married?

- Frontline. For Sadovsky. The brigade commander is no match for our brother. Now she will not look in our direction. What are you staring at? Did you have any calculations? Late. Yes, and with Maya you have an empty number. She has to fly higher.

- Wait. What are you talking about? Calculations and more. And what about Maya? Let's go in order. What kind of marriage is there when this is happening all around?

Yes, no marriage. You will not be invited to visit. You can't count. I said, on the front. She slept and became a wife, or, as they say now, a field wife - "pepezhe" (PIPZH).

"In such an environment, and marriage," I said, "you invent everything. Did something annoy you?"

- I'm not imagining anything. The day before yesterday Sadovsky called her to his car. I called Gasan that he was ill and asked her to send her only. Sat there in the evening. Yesterday I also called to send it, and came in the morning. So the bean is dead," he concluded.

I felt sad. Something is lost. Not for me, but for everyone. I bought one, senior in position, but lost everything. Everyone, whenever possible, spoke to her, dropped a joke and was glad to receive a friendly word, a smile in return. In this situation, to hear a kind word, and even more so to see a smile addressed to you, was already a joy. And now she's been taken from

everyone.

"Yes, what did you mean by saying that with Maya I have an empty number?" Does it look like I'm on to something?

"There is nothing to hide from me. Everything is noticeable. Don't pretend to be a simpleton. You had no business with Lozhkina, but you are not indifferent to Maya. I managed to notice this, and everyone can see it. Now what do you expect? A tidbit, but you can't get it.

"I don't like your tone, you cynic. Can you tell me what happened to Maya? Yes, her fate is not indifferent to me

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personal. She interests me. I only wish her the best and hope for nothing. She is a doctor and older than me. I am of no use to her. But her troubles would have upset me too. What happened to her?

— So far, nothing. Maksimov approaches her. He takes matters into his own hands. Yesterday I called her to my place, but she quickly returned, crying. She said something to Gasan, and he consoled her. Maximov has been visiting us several times in recent days. And he decided to beat for sure, but so far, apparently, he has nothing didn't work out.

- How so? He's very old. How is he not ashamed?

What shame are you talking about? How much life is left there? At least experience some joy. They can do it, they have power, separate machines — the conditions allow it. It won't get you or me anything. And they are not good, they will take it by force. Against the will of Maksimov Maya will not resist. Swallows her. Where should she go?

- Enough! They will come for me soon. Give it to me.

— Go and sign with Gasan.

While receiving, I met Dr. Maya. Hello. She passed by and went somewhere. He folded the received medical equipment at the porch of the house and sat down in anticipation of the car. It was relatively calm in the medical platoon. The Red Army soldiers and commanders came for dressings, with injuries and with minor wounds, which could be left in the unit, patients came for an outpatient appointment.

- What were you thinking, depressed?

Maya stood in front of me. I jumped up and stood in front of her.

- Why are you sad? Alive, healthy. And thank God. What's good about you?

"I feel bad because you feel bad.

- What do you know?

I looked at her. Short hair from under the cap even went to her. A clean white deaf dressing gown with ties at the back, a cotton skirt. Chrome boots with high heels, bare feet. There was no gymnast - under

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a bra was designated as a dressing gown. Sad black eyes openly looked at me.

"Why are you looking at me like that?" Is something wrong again? However, all the peasants eat me up with their eyes when you meet my eyes, - I thought, - if only with my eyes ... Let's go for a walk. Are you in a hurry? Are you waiting for a car? Why are you silent? One I say. Say something. Well!

She walked along the path to the garden, near the first trees of which she could see a table with two benches.

So are we going to keep quiet?

She wanted to speak out, as I felt.

"Like everyone else, as you can see, I'm eating you with my eyes. And I can't look away. It's nice to watch. I really wanted to see you and for this I came up with the idea of obtaining medicines. I didn't even know what I wanted. I would like to see you - my older sister. Perhaps this is the real truth. And if my sister is doing well, then I am happy, I feel good, and if she has grief, then I feel bad. I see you now  
very bad.

"I feel bad, you guessed it right. But no one will help me," she sat down on a bench and pointed to me opposite, "sit down. What I experienced in the last week, I considered the worst in my entire life, but it turns out that there is something even worse. Excuse me for sniffing, why do you care about me?

- I'm listening to.

- No no no. Enough. I already said too much, - she got up, la got up. - It is time. The sick are waiting for me, and they should drive up for you. Sorry again. It's embarrassing that we're alone. Another reason to talk. Went.

"Sit down, Maya, and hear me out. Sit down. There won't be another chance like this. Maksimov is trying to get you and will get you. You will have no other choice..."

- How do you know!? Shepsholev spoke? Gossip! Although he told the truth, and she burst into tears like a child: her hands on the table with clenched fists, her head in her hands and shudders in sobs all over. The cap fell off the head, short hair, a thin, for some reason long, thin neck, shovels

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ki and stifled sobs. How drooping, helpless she was at that moment. Apparently, the accumulated experiences, anxiety, everything experienced and the inevitability of what was expected found a way out in these sobs. I touched her shoulder with my hand, stroked her, gently ruffled her hair, and said:

- Cry, cry - it will become easier. We must cry.

The sobs became more sonorous, with moans, the body began to shudder even more. Finally she began to calm down, reached into the pocket of her robe, pulled out a piece of gauze, began to wipe her tears, blow her nose, sobbing, she said:

"Excuse me, I must be so limp, excuse me, how I fell apart ... well, a weakling. Forgive me a thousand times.

- You didn't listen to me. Listen! Maksimov is already an old man. He has a family, children, and possibly grandchildren.

"Don't insult me," and she burst into tears again, "at least don't insult me!"

- Please listen to me. Your connection with him will be shameless and shameful, and I offer a way out if you do not want to become his "page". I'm sure they haven't yet.

She stared at me.

"I'll shoot myself, I'll kill myself, but I won't become a whore."

Why kill yourself? Listen. Let us declare ourselves husband and wife. And then he will not pursue you. We can arrange our marriage - a fictitious marriage, and I promise that I will not claim you as a wife. Maybe we will have to be together more often in front of everyone, to retire for people, but, I repeat, I will not insist on any intimacy. If we stay alive, we'll get divorced, and everyone will find someone they want. By the way, I am engaged, or rather, I gave my word to the girl that if I stay alive, then after the war I will marry her, and she promised to wait for me. So don't be afraid of me. I said everything.

She looked at me with teary eyes as she sat on the bench. I stood opposite and also looked at her. I waited for a decision, but she was silent and kept looking at me with unblinking eyes. We were brought out of our stupor by the call of foreman Nikolaev:

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- Doctor, it's time to go, everyone is waiting, let's go! Kiss and let's go. Well, quiet...

He walked towards us, stopped when he saw the tear-stained face of Dr. Maya.

"Sorry, I didn't mean to interfere, I didn't know," he hesitated and stepped back.

"Well, how?" I asked Maya.

- Thank you. I think it's so unexpected. Thank you dear brother. I'll think, I'll think. It's not so scary anymore, but to me. Thank you.

She came up to me, put her hands on my shoulders, stood up on her toes, pulled me in and kissed me on the cheek: "Go to your place." Thank you, thank you. I'll think it over.

I was embarrassed and deprived of my voice with her touch and kiss, this small, fragile woman who became even dearer to me. I stood in a daze. I could not say anything - the words did not come. He turned and walked along the path from the garden, overtook the foreman. He continued to stand as if rooted to the spot, turning his head first to Maya, then in my direction, spreading his arms, pulling his head into shoulders.

- What's going on here?

"Let's go, let's go, sergeant!" I was already rushing him.

I took a bundle with medicines, gave a gauze bag with dressing material to the foreman and went to the car.

"Something very important happened, very important, but what, I did not truncate. Open my eyes to an event of local significance, doctor," the sergeant-major followed me and lamented.

"Sergeant Major, you didn't see or hear anything. So, no questions or conversations," I interrupted him.

They climbed into the back of the car and went to their location.

Saturday, August 15, 1942

This day turned out to be unexpectedly happy for many, despite such a tense situation. At last they brought a whole pile of newspapers and letters. Delighted, of course, letters. Many received several, but there were

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and such that none. I received two. One from Aunt Faina from Leningrad with the address of my family. And the second from the elder sister from the Urals, Mr. Miass, where they were evacuated with the whole family. Living in a hostel. Attached them to the copper smelter. Mother with older sister and brother work as laborers in some shop. The second sister is studying at a vocational school. She is fed three times a day. The younger sister is 2 years old in the kindergarten at the plant. They also feed her there. Mother and the others are living hand to mouth, as I understand it, but they hope to last until better times. It is difficult for them, very difficult, but at least they are alive and did not remain in the occupation. Manko, Gen, Naumov and many others did not receive any letters.

Sargsyan arrived from the brigade's combat area and told the situation at dinner.

— A big porridge was brewed there. The Germans have a lot of tanks and submachine gunners on motorcycles and in cars. Airplanes pave the way and rush to Stalingrad. I tried to go by rail, but our people are firmly standing there. The state farm, Abganerovo and the junction are kept. And his tanks are on fire, and there are many Germans, and many of ours have been killed, but he keeps climbing and climbing. They said that the column went to the Volga, to the lakes. There are few of our troops there, and he quickly went to Krasnoarmeysk.

What's left of the brigade? Are there tanks still?

- In the 2nd tank battalion, only four tanks remained on the move. We made one. Tracks have been replaced. There, he hit himself on the arm. Yes, it's petty. Our fuel truck exploded and the driver died. "Messer" shot him. At Voropaev, two repairmen died at the siding. I don't know the last name. Lieutenant Colonel Ivanov told me.

Thursday, August 20, 1942 HOLDING POSITION.

The position of our troops on the southern approaches to Stalingrad is very serious. There are heavy battles. The enemy continuously attacks the positions occupied by units

our brigade. Arriving people say that the remnants of the units are still in the area of the state farm. Yurkin and junction 74th kilometer, where in the combat formations of the significantly weakened 204th and 138th rifle divisions they hold the defense. There is no order to leave. Until the last tank, until the last warrior will hold the occupied lines. More and more new units and formations of our troops are approaching, they are going into battle on the move.

At noon, two of our transport vehicles arrived in the Zetas, carrying ammunition to the battalions and loaded on the return flight with the wounded, and one ambulance from the medical platoon with the wounded. They were accompanied by medical instructor Ivanov.

Two of the wounded died from blood loss on the way. They were unloaded and placed for the time being at the repair shed until it was clear where to bury them. The rest I bandaged together with Ivanov, straightened the tires, put some on again. Most of the wounded were severe: burnt, with broken bones, bandages soaked in blood. They lay on the straw in the backs of cars, in an ambulance, on a stretcher. All of us were shocked by the sight and suffering of these crippled people. He recommended taking the wounded to Tundutovo, and if they could not be handed over there, then to Krasnoarmeysk along the route already familiar to me. That's where they left.

Friday, August 21, 1942 REINFORCEMENT DURING THE BATTLE.

An engineering company has arrived in the Zetas to equip the command post. Single transport vehicles and flyers approached. The remnants of the brigade fought fierce battles with the enemy, less and less equipment and people remained in the ranks. The enemy was constantly attacking. So far we have held defensive lines. The state farm and the junction were still in our hands, which held back the advance of the enemy towards Stalingrad. They also held the Tinguta station, despite repeated attacks by the enemy. We all passed fresh parts to the south and

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quite often they transported the wounded to the north. The cannonade did not stop and was clearly audible in the Zetas. There were heated debates about the future fate of the brigade. Some said that it would be necessary to withdraw for reorganization until the entire commanding staff and service units were killed. I would receive tanks with crews, other equipment and, having experience, would be useful for military affairs. The majority supported this direction of the conversation. Others, in particular Dyakov, Zavgorodny, believed that as long as at least one tank or gun remained, the brigade would not be removed from the front line, in pursuance of the order of the Supreme Commander No. 227.

Saturday, August 22, 1942 THE ENEMY IS COMING.

Heavy bloody battles continued on the southern approaches to Stalingrad. The enemy stubbornly rushed forward. The remnants of our brigade held the state farm. Yurkina, passing and art. Tingut, who were attacked by the enemy five or six times in sugki. The enemy captured the village of Abganerovo.

Before breakfast, the duty officer formed a company. The food was ready, but the people were not being fed. They stood for a long time. Finally, the commander and political instructor approached the formation.

— Listen to another lightning, — Titov opened the folder and began to read: — Comrades! Since August 17, our tank and motorized rifle machine-gun battalions have been carrying out heavy bloody battles with the enemy, delaying his advance to Stalingrad. Our tankers with cannon and machine gun fire helped the rifle subunits to hold the line. A military technician of the 1-th rank, Pak, distinguished himself at the junction of the 74th kilometer. With his tank, he destroyed two enemy self-propelled guns, broke into the enemy's battle formations, crushed several mortars, a cannon and enemy manpower with his caterpillars. The commander of a tank company also distinguished himself

Martynenko, having made a raid into the camp of the Nazis, destroyed a battery of mortars and quite a few Germans. The rest fired from a place to

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submachine gunners, artillery and mortar batteries. At the same time, I am reporting a very unfortunate fact. Tank commander Kobtsev put his car out of action, sabotaging the exit to the battlefield in every possible way, which was found out after a thorough check. By the decision of the military tribunal, he was shot in front of the battalion as a traitor to the Motherland.

The commissar closed the folder and looked back at the commander. The commander spoke:

Comrade Red Army soldiers and commanders! The soldiers of our brigade stand to the death on the occupied lines, perform feats, many, very many laid down their lives, but honestly fulfilled their military duty, the order of the Supreme Commander-in-Chief Comrade Stalin: "Not a step back!" But there are also cowardly traitors to the Motherland. Kobtsev was overtaken by a severe punishment, so it will be with every traitor. We are facing severe trials. It is possible that the company will have to take up the defense of the Zeta area if the enemy breaks through and meet him with weapons in his hands. I hope that there will be no faint-hearted among us and we will honestly fulfill our military duty. Ordered to participate in the construction of a defensive line in front of the Zetas. The land was given to us. People will be allocated for this, we will start today after breakfast. Start breakfast! Disperse!

During the meal, a lively conversation broke out. Almost everyone expressed an opinion—often passionately, sometimes with a retort. There were no indifferent people. There was a conversation about Kobtsev.

- The guy was scared. He is not an enemy of Soviet power, of the Motherland. However, he was treated harshly.

- Guys, in the war it is impossible otherwise. He will not want to go into battle, the other will not. What will happen? Who to fight? This should be severely punished. That is why the tribunal exists in wartime.

- It's like that. If you go on the attack, the enemy will kill you, if you don't go, they will kill your own. Eh oh oh! someone sighed hard.

Sunday, August 23, 1943 THE BEGINNING OF THE BARBARIAN BOMBING OF STALINGRAD.

Early in the morning, even before breakfast, for the umpteenth time the "frame" flew around our location. And soon after the departure of this harbinger of trouble, they heard the roar of enemy bombers entering the peak. Bombs rained down. Many were overturned by the blast wave, sprinkled with clods of earth, gravel, uprooted a tree, tore off part of the roof in one of the barns. Then came a fading intermittent rumble and saw the leaving enemy bombers. I was near the workshops. The blast shook me too. Belatedly clung to the ground, like other comrades. Somehow it became very quiet around. The enemy planes did not return, but we could not get off the ground.

Someone from the outfit came to his senses first. There was a bewildered, belated command:

- Everyone in the trenches! Stop work, everyone in the trenches!

Suddenly they heard screams:

Doctors here, doctors!

Through the noise in my head, it began to reach that my name was called, that a job had appeared. He got up with difficulty, shook off the clods of earth - they need you, you must act!

I ran to the car where my sanitary equipment was. Chef Kharitonov rushed towards them.

- Comrade military assistant! People are beaten up there. In the house as gasped, in the mud hut, where the barrels of diesel fuel. I was shunned from the kitchen - I flew somersault! And the hut failed. Maybe there is someone there, but the lads have been mowed down. On the spot, - he lamented, following me.

— Calm down. Run after me.

The victims were taken to one place. Two people were already lying behind the dilapidated hut, and one was sitting with his back against a tree. He covered his bloody left shoulder with his right hand.

He shouted:

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- Doctor, bandage, all the blood will flow out, look! And he showed his bloodied hand.

"There is another one lying there, all torn up," they pointed me in the direction of the sheds.

"Take the stretcher and bring it here," I ordered and went to those lying on the grass. The man who was wounded in the shoulder, sitting by the tree, howled loudly when he saw that I had gone to the others:

- Why did you get around me? I'll die, doctor. Bandage my hand. Please, doctor, dear!

"Wait calmly, I'll do everything," and he went to the lying wounded. They didn't scream. One groaned softly, the other was silent, but his breath was whistling, coughing, and bloody foam came out of his mouth. He sat down to him, cut the tunic with a garden knife along with an undershirt. On the right, under the armpit, a deep wound gaped, into which, with each breath, outside air was sucked in with a squelching sound. The wounded man has a penetrating shrapnel wound to the chest. The body is covered in blood and contaminated with earth.

I wiped the dirt around the wound with a piece of unfolded bandage, smeared its edges and the surface around with iodine tincture. He tore the dressing bag, lubricated the rubberized wrapper with Vaseline and closed the wound with it, put the pads of the bag on top, cotton wool and strengthened it all with bandages. Went to the second one. Again the seated man cried out and wept, asking him to be bandaged. But the wounded in the chest needed more urgent help than others, according to vital indications. To stop these screams, I went to the sitting wounded man, cut his sleeve with a knife, unscrewed the flaps and saw a through shrapnel wound of the soft tissues of the shoulder, apparently without damaging the bone. Blood oozed from the wound. I put a tourniquet on him above the wound, he calmed down somewhat. He returned to the recumbent, who groaned softly. He quickly glanced at him. The tunic and trousers on the left leg were soaked with blood in many places - multiple wounds to the chest and left shin. While fiddling with them, they brought a fourth wounded man on a stretcher from the barns, where a bomb had also exploded. He was wounded by shrapnel

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kami in the thigh, buttock and lower abdomen - apparently, penetrating wounds in the small pelvis. He smeared the wounds with tincture of iodine, applied bandages.

There was already an onboard vehicle for the evacuation of the wounded. The commander ordered it. Where to take them? I didn't know where our medical platoon was, and it was pointless to take them to the front line. I decided that it was better to go to Tundutovo or Krasnoarmeysk, where I left Tsvetkov, Solod, and even earlier Kruglyakov for days. Loaded into the back of the car, drove off. The road was shrouded in clouds of dust. Suddenly we noticed that the cars in front were hastily turning away from the road, a low-flying plane flashed over us, and the car burst through the line. The driver slowed down and fell out of the cab. I threw myself in the opposite direction, crawled away from the road a bit and clung to the ground. I realized that we were fired from an enemy plane. They were waiting for another raid, but it was quiet around. Warriors rose next to other machines. Through the standing dust in the sky, nothing could be seen. Climbed into the body to the wounded. I saw a lifeless reclining body



a Red Army soldier wounded in the shoulder - the most lightly wounded. He was dead. The tunic was perforated in the area of the chest and abdomen and soaked in patches of blood.

We got to the Tundutovo station. We turned to the familiar medical battalion. There was panic. There was an urgent loading of cars. We received an order to evacuate to Krasnoarmeysk. It was said that the Germans had broken through the defenses and were marching on Tundutovo. They put four more lightly wounded in the car, gave them cards of the advanced area and ordered them to take everyone to Krasnoarmeysk, where I went. I left the dead Red Army soldier with documents with them. The wounded in the chest and abdomen became very heavy. Especially the last one, kept asking for a drink, but he couldn't. The lightly wounded could not look at these torments and begged him to give him a drink. I allowed them to moisten their mucous lips with wet gauze kwach. The wounded in the chest were given small

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sips of water. After a very long time, as it seemed to us, we reached Krasnoarmeysk.

We drove up to the hospital, where he had left his colleagues a few days ago. In the admission department I met the same Vasilievna, very energetic and efficient.

"I've arrived as promised, Vasilievna!" Accept the wounded instead of mine, whom I want to take away. How are mine?

- Like pickles. Here they are. And the commander was sent across the Volga. He was very hard. Kidneys failed. Poisoned by antifreeze.

"We assumed so. [Where are the others?

- We'll find it. Let's go look for the doctor on duty, - and she led me along, - we are waiting for transport. By evening and overnight, everyone should be evacuated to Beketovka or across the Volga. We don't know ourselves yet. They say that the enemy has broken through our defenses and his darkness is coming to Stalingrad. What is heard on the front line? And where is she?

- Until damned. We don't know what will happen next.

In search of a doctor on duty, we walked around part of the premises. The hospital was located in one lane in houses, outbuildings, tents. The wounded and sick lay on the floor on straw, on bunks, on trestle beds. Near them were busy medical workers, nurses from convalescents. They were getting ready to evacuate.

Found Sasha Tsvetkov. He was in uniform, helped in the care of the wounded of the department where he lay. He was unspeakably delighted with me, said that he was already going to get to the Zetas by passing cars. He took us to Kruglyakov. He was lying on the bunk. He jumped up when he saw us, was very happy, asked to be taken to the unit. Was in underwear, bathrobe and slippers.

Found the emergency doctor. He categorically refused to take the wounded, he said that they themselves had to evacuate from one hour to the next, they were waiting for transport, that there was no time to mess with the heavy ones, that this was a hospital for the lightly wounded. ordered to be taken to

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the other, to Beketovka. I explained to him that ours were retreating, that I was in a hurry to catch my unit, that I would take two of my men, but he was inexorable.

Then Vasilievna brought me together with one medical chief, and he ordered to receive the wounded and discharge those whom he asked to be discharged. With Tsvetkov it was easy, but with Kruglyakov things got more complicated. Documents were issued, but his clothes were closed. The storekeeper went somewhere for property or transport. And again Vasilievna came to the rescue. She brought some uniforms, though small in size. I didn't get my boots, I allowed me to take slippers.

Vasilievna took us to the kitchen, and we had some more refreshment for the journey. Golden meet people in life!

They decided to go to the Zetas north of Tundutovo, to Ivanovka, Nariman, so as not to get to the Germans. We did not know the situation, but in Tundutovo we knew, we were preparing for the evacuation.

When we drove to one of the next hills, we saw that the cars ahead were stopping and people, having gathered in a heap, were discussing something heatedly and pointing in the south-west direction. And we saw above the horizon a black flock of planes coming our way. By the characteristic intermittent hum, they realized that these were German twin-engine bombers "Junkers" and "Heinkels". Suddenly, as if on cue, people ran into their cars and began to disperse on different sides of the road. Enemy aircraft armada passed over us in the direction of Stalingrad. Messerschmitts scurried around the bombers from all sides like wasps. Each of us mechanically counted, with our heads up, the enemy machines, but lost count. Five or six dozen passed. The swastikas on the wings were clearly visible. A minute later, they saw how one after another the planes began to turn to the left wing, go into a dive, and at the moment of exit, several black cigars were separated from the planes, which, first sideways, and then with their tip, went to the ground. They entered the peak and came out of it strictly

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sequentially, one plane after another. After a short time, they saw fiery flashes at the edge of the horizon, then they heard the sounds of dull explosions. The planes, dropping deadly cargo, gathered and, accompanied by fighters, left in a westerly direction. It was not noticeable that something upset their ranks. Behind the horizon, clouds of black and white smoke rose up and out. We all stood there, shocked by what we saw.

For a long time they could not get out of their stupor.

- It was Stalingrad that was bombed, - Sergeant Major Kruglyakov said quietly, - such an armada passed, and no one touched them.

"What a force," the driver lamented. "They didn't even pay attention to farts. Ours did not even manage to disperse them.

Stalingrad is on fire. [where are our forces, where are the planes?

"Let's go to ours," I hurried.

And at that time they again heard the familiar ominous intermittent rumble of engines and saw a new black flock of enemy bombers going to Stalingrad, accompanied by Messerschmitts. This armada was no less than the previous one. And again went to the city. This time, not all enemy planes left. Several smoke plumes hit the ground. Their system was upset. The clouds of smoke grew even larger and wider and covered an ever larger area. The city was on fire.

It was 17 o'clock in the afternoon. The bombing of Stalingrad began more than half an hour ago, somewhere at 16.20-16.30, on August 23, 1942. This is the time and date of the beginning of the barbaric destruction of Stalingrad. And before that, there were raids on the city, single bomb explosions in its various districts, individual houses were destroyed and set on fire, oil storage facilities were burning near the right bank of the Volga. But there was a white-stone, multi-storey city in the center with smoking factory chimneys interspersed with green areas and larger green areas and one-story houses on the periphery, living on working days.

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Explosions of anti-aircraft shells flashed in the sky with short pops. Our fighters broke into the enemy formation. Single enemy planes were knocked out of the flock and did not return back. But most of them left to return again. Every thirty or forty minutes a new armada of German bombers came in, dropping bombs on the city. And they went west again. We, stunned, continued our way to the southwest - to the Zetas.

We made a halt near Ivanovka. Each of us was silent, experienced what he saw. We were seized with fear. Yes, fear for the future, for one's own destiny, fear for the Motherland. Perhaps the personal was not so prominent. I didn't think about death or life. There were thoughts about relatives, about the country as a whole. What will happen? Where does the enemy have such great forces? Why so many planes? Avalanche after avalanche. It destroys Stalingrad, which means that it expects to reach it. Not a single bomb was dropped on the way to the city. But our troops will not leave like that. Will crush them, destroy them. For the time being, we are "plannedly" withdrawing, But there is nowhere to retreat further. An unprecedented battle is coming, the witnesses and participants of which will be us, me. Are you strong enough to survive? They must, perhaps, for sure, at the cost of the lives of each of us who found ourselves on this front. And while I am alive, it fell to be a witness of a great historical event. Will I see it all?

With these thoughts, we reached the Zetas after dark. He reported to the commander about the wounded, that he had brought Tsvetkov and Kruglyakov, and about the avalanches of German planes bombing Stalingrad since the second half of the day. Here they also saw how large groups of enemy bombers flew over them to Stalingrad.

Retreating divisions of the brigade gathered in Zetas. So far, single vehicles with goods and people have been approaching. From the arrivals it became known that by noon the Germans had taken possession of the state farm, the siding, and by the end of the day they had occupied Tinguta station. The remnants of the units of our brigade move away with battles along with other units and formations

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along the railroad. Our divisions are to assemble in the Zetas. All the troops of the 64th Army are retreating with battles under the onslaught of the enemy. To the north of us, the Germans had already come close to Stalingrad somewhere. To the east, the enemy bypassed us along the railway and went far in the direction of Krasnoarmeysk, the Volga lakes, and the Volga. We are in a bag. We are threatened with encirclement.

After dinner there was another lightning. Commissioner Titov spoke. He officially confirms what was considered rumors. He reported that the enemy had broken through the defenses of the 138th Rifle Division and broke into the location of the 74th kilometer siding. He was kicked out again. Our tankers fired from the spot at the machine gunners, artillery and mortar batteries of the enemy. Four attacks of the enemy were repulsed, but at noon the fascists took possession of the siding, and our troops withdrew. | - The th tank battalion lost three T-34s and two T-70s there. There are only two T-34s left. This, perhaps, is all that remained in the brigade. The enemy also occupied the state farm, and we retreated. Only now have they been informed that the enemy has occupied the station of Tinguta, from which it is thirty kilometers to Stalingrad.

"The position of our troops is very difficult. Perhaps we will be allowed to withdraw to new lines of defense. On behalf of the company commander, I order: to load all the property onto vehicles, everything that you need and can take with you. Proceed with loading immediately and wait for the return of the commander, who left for the brigade headquarters. The commanders of platoons and squads, after dark, take up all-round defense of the location of the company in accordance with the plan of military engineer Kalmykov.

Nobody closed their eyes that night. Cars were loaded, waiting for the commander's return.

### Chapter Three

RETREAT (August 24 - September 9, 1942)

Monday, August 24, 1942 MEETING WITH "THE ENEMY LANDING".

The Ugra confirmed the command to be ready to move to a new location. Some people were sent to build anti-tank barriers. Others continued to load the vehicles that were on the move with property. It was unrealistic to count on the second flight. Pony mali that they will take out what they seize on one flight. All day long, single vehicles with soldiers from brigade units approached. Warriors left without military equipment came out. Everyone retreated to the north, northeast to Stalingrad. Passed by fresh units in the area of hostilities.

I learned that the medical platoon of the brigade with the wounded arrived in the Zetas. I hastened to them. We set up a dressing room and an operating room in one tent. For evacuation, two ambulances and one airborne vehicle were ready. The wounded are mostly heavy. They sent them to the northeast without a specific address - where they could hand over. They were accompanied by medical instructor Ivanov.

Met with Dr Maya. She, as always, was glad to see me alive. She, like doctor Lozhkina and nurse Luda, was tired and dirty. Pity women, a heavy burden fell on their shoulders. I received a dressing material from the military assistant Shepshelev and went to my room. Maya caught up with me.

"I'll walk you out for a bit, can I?"

I am touched by your attention.

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How quiet it is here. I can't believe that we have gone through such horrors. And what awaits us? There are no forces anymore. I would like to take a shower now, clean myself up a bit. She is disgusted with herself. We are surrounded by men all the time. You can't even wash properly. There are no conditions, and the situation does not allow. What are we turning into?

I put a pack of dressings on the ground and turned to her. She has changed in these weeks. She became older, the light faded somewhat in her eyes, she was exhausted, blue under her eyes.

— Are you sick?

"No," she shook her head and glared at me. - And what?

— Black circles under the eyes have changed. Nothing happened?

- As you can see, she is alive, but what could happen?

- Maximov did not bother? I asked pointedly.

- That's what you're talking about! No. He is not up to me.

"So you won't marry me?"

"Not yet," she smiled.

- So, the need for a fictitious marriage has disappeared. I don't go back on my words. I'll agree to a last resort, if necessary, and to a legal marriage," I burst out, and I immediately corrected myself: "What am I saying, don't think badly.

- I understand, you're kidding.

"I don't know if this is a joke or not.

- What kind of marriage can you think of? While I would like to wash and lie down to sleep.

- Yes, I can arrange a bath for you, perhaps for all of you. For you, Lozhkina and for Luda.

"That would be great," she brightened up, "where, when?"

— At a friend's Kalmyk teacher, where they gave me a room for a first-aid post, but I rarely went there. There is a boiler where we can heat water. They have a well in their yard. I will agree with her and tell you all. In the evening, perhaps, it is most convenient.

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- How amazing! I will make the girls happy. Thank you. You are my angel!

- And who are you for me?

- Sister. And a senior comrade," she added officially and official. Joyful lights again lit up in the eyes, a warm, sly smile appeared, - thank you, little brother,  
what you are.

"Younger brother..." I repeated, "but I will grow and get older if they don't interfere."

May God grant you to grow to old age. I'm sorry, I'm sorry, I have to run. Thanks for entertaining me a bit. Until the evening!

He took the dressing kit to the company and ran to the teacher. She agreed to warm the water in the evening and help our medical women wash up. I was glad that I could do something nice for them.

The 2nd tank battalion received reinforcements - five T-34 tanks, along with crews, and was sent to take up defense west of the Tinguta station as part of other units. The remnants of the 1st tank battalion withdrew from the siding and arrived in Zeta with two tanks. The day passed very uneasily. Waiting for an enemy breakthrough. Large groups of aircraft flew over us several times to Stalingrad. Artillery cannonade and muffled explosions of aerial bombs were heard periodically to the south-east of our location.

I ran to my mistress, a Kalmyk woman. She has already warmed up the water, prepared buckets and bowls, and showed them the place in the outbuilding where they usually wash themselves. I followed the women to the medical platoon before it got dark. They were waiting for me there. They quickly gathered, and I led them to my mistress. On the way, we noticed that many of the oncoming soldiers were looking at the sky. Our location flew around the "frame" - a bad harbinger. Most often wait after him bombers.

In the location of the company, the cars were pulled into a column. Received a command to leave the village and disperse in the hollow of the northeast Zeta. When lined up

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column, I got into the cab of the onboard vehicle. At this time, a message was received that a group of saboteur submachine gunners landed from two enemy transport planes north of the village of Zeta. This was often resorted to by the advancing enemy in order to cause panic among the defenders and help the advance of the main forces. A new command was received: "Take all-round defense right there, with the available forces and means." To do this, they assigned a group of people and, under the command of Lieutenant Zavgorodny, took up a circular defense around our location. In addition, a mobile group was formed to fight the landing. A car with machine gunners about ten people was singled out from the company. From the 1st tank battalion, two remaining tanks on the move.

Soon this united group passed us to the north. Then a new order followed: to bring the cars out of the village. And we drove along the road leading to Blinnikov. Soon the column stopped. Rifle and machine gun fire was heard not far from us. It seems that they met with an enemy landing force. We turned off the road a little to the left, stood and took up defense around our cars. Everyone was tense to the limit, waiting for shots from behind any bush,

hillock. Dusk set in, it got dark. How to know in such a difficult situation, and even in that note, where are ours, where the enemy may be. While they stood, or rather lay on the defensive, waiting for instructions. Evenings and nights became chilly. It was cold to lie on the ground. I had to wear overcoats. Our defense did not look impressive. Three-ruler rifles were worn by the Red Army soldiers, carbines by the drivers, pistols by the commanders. Some of them had several grenades. The leader of our column was Kalmykov. The company commander remained in the Zetas. Suddenly we heard strong muffled explosions a few kilometers away, near the village of Zeta, and the rumble of aircraft flying over us. The enemy bombed the Zetas. In addition to ours, there were many other military units, civilians. All thought about female doctors. Did you manage to wash and return to your honey

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medical platoon and whether they fell under the bombing. It was hard to admit to myself, but I thought about Maya, does she need help? The Germans usually rarely bombed at night and did not attack. Apparently, they were in a hurry to Stalingrad. Military technician Gen lifted me from the area where he was defending with a pistol in his hand, and said that he was ordered to capture me and return in one car to the Zetas, where there are wounded and killed among our repairmen. We went on board the car, which was my property. He got into the cab, I climbed into the back. Arrived on time. Among our remaining four were wounded, one was killed. He bandaged the wounded and took them to the medical platoon of the brigade. Where will they send them, what will they do with them and other incoming wounded? Where are the medical institutions of the army, the front?

Saw Dr Maya. She said that when they finished washing, the bombing began. They returned to their place during the bombing. Has no idea how it all worked out. Added:

"They washed themselves so wonderfully, and everything could have ended so sadly. With difficulty they ran to themselves. And what happened and is happening around? All the same hell. Thank you for bringing joy. So it was great! And again a terrible carousel. And without end. I run to the wounded.

Here's how it all turned out. Better not imagine. Indeed, how will it be...

He returned to his company. Almost without delay, the entire column went north into the impenetrable darkness. Dust and sand hung like a solid wall above us. We walked without turning on the headlights. There was no road to be seen, no landmarks in the steppe, but they were moving forward, or rather, retreating.

Woke up from shots. I dozed off in the cockpit. There was chaotic rifle and machine gun fire at the head of our column. An alarm command was transmitted along the stopped cars: "Paratroopers! Enemy submachine gunners! Take up defense! To battle! There was shooting all around, bullets whistling. I pulled out a pistol, lay down near the cars and opened fire into the darkness. I did not see the enemy.

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Everyone was shooting, and so was I. The shootout lasted for five minutes. Then a duplicate command was transmitted from the head of the column to the vehicles:

- Do not shoot! Stop shooting! Hang up! Do not shoot!

Soon the shots stopped. As it turned out, we met one of our outgoing units. And for some reason, they took us or we took them for an enemy landing, and someone opened fire, and a skirmish began on both sides. Ours heard commands in Russian from the other side, and they from ours, and figured it out in this way. Due to this misunderstanding, the "enemy" lost two people wounded, fortunately, we did not have any casualties. In the morning, our group approached, which, with two tanks, left in the evening in search of an enemy landing. They didn't find him.

Tuesday, August 25, 1942 BREAD AND ALCOHOL.

The rest of the night was on the move. After a skirmish with an imaginary landing party, they did not dare to doze off on the way, they were waiting for a real enemy. After all, he landed somewhere ahead, as they said. It was not ruled out that the enemy bypassed our units. Everyone was on their guard, the tension reached a high intensity, especially since they did not know the situation, did not know where we were and where we were going.

North of Stalingrad, the German tank divisions broke through to the Volga on August 23rd. There were fierce battles. The situation is no less difficult on the sector of the South-Eastern Front. Our brigade is actually incapacitated. She needs to be reformed. Must get new technique people. Only a few dozen people remained in the tank battalions. The motorized rifle machine-gun battalion suffered the most. More than two-thirds of the train was killed at the junction and the state farm.

The commander said that in our area, in the rear of our troops, there was an enemy group of saboteurs — submachine gunners on motorcycles in Red Army uniforms. Last night they drove into the location of the artillery battalion, which occupied the defense. Chalk

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in groups they dispersed near the batteries, warehouses with ammunition and fuel, and at the signal of the rockets they threw grenades at them. They killed our machine guns and hid in the steppe without loss. All units of the 64th Army have been warned about this. Special groups were organized to search for and destroy saboteurs. The commander urged to increase vigilance, to constantly carry weapons with him. Strengthened the security of our location. The company was ordered to disperse the vehicles along the ravine and wait for further instructions.

After the meeting, the foreman of the company, Nikolaev, reported to the commander that food was almost running out, that there was nothing in the brigade warehouse - the trucks with food had burned down. While the brigade received it, he asked permission from the commander to go to Stalingrad to get something on demand. The commander allowed him to take the car, and he left.

In the afternoon, large groups of enemy bombers began to fly again through our position towards Stalingrad. The enemy continued to systematically and prudently destroy the city.

After dinner, when it was already beginning to get dark, Nikolaev returned. He went to report to the commander, and the people reached out to the car to find out the news that they had brought. The driver took on the role of informer. He showed me a half-eaten brick of bread that had not been eaten or seen for a long time. He said, smiling slyly, that a quarter of the car had brought bread, and under a tarpaulin also cereals and something else.

- Like Stalingrad, what is heard there? someone asked the driver.

He immediately became gloomy and answered seriously:

"Bad, very bad. Everything is on fire. Everything is on fire. Bombs fall. There are many killed and wounded. Stalingrad is gone. We barely got out. I don't know how they survived.

- Chief! I would treat you with bread, - voices were heard.

"Tomorrow everyone will have breakfast." Disperse!

They began to unload the onboard vehicle into a closed warehouse booth. We unloaded bags, boxes, bread and three metal

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personal barrels. Nikolaev secretly told me that he had brought alcohol.

- Take the dishes, doctor, and come. I'll pour you a drink until they're handed over to the brigade. Alcohol is awesome.

"Any one is good for me for medical purposes," I said, "but isn't it arboreal?" Will people get poisoned if they start drinking it?

- What do you! Pure. Got it from a distillery. They said ethyl. Must be normal.

How did they get so many?

"It's a long story, Doctor. In short, I can say that I was lucky. On request, he ordered canned food, cereals and bread at the food distribution point. At that time, some rank, evidently from the commissaries, drove up in an emka and told their chief that the distillery was on fire and something had to be taken there. They did not have a truck, and they offered me to go. I agreed and followed their car. I had to wait out the next bombing. Fortunately, we passed. When we arrived at the plant, it really was on fire in many places, like many other things were burning around China, they approached the checkpoint, showed documents, papers, and opened the gates for us. We entered the yard. They opened a warehouse where there were barrels of alcohol. And they helped us get loaded. At the same time, they said that they would disappear anyway, and loaded as much as they asked. They left me three barrels, Ikhyai brought them. So take it, pour it into something for yourself.

- Thank you, but how is the city, what about Stalingrad?

- Everything is lost there, and the city will be lost, there is no living place left. Destroys his bastard to the ground. What is not broken, it will burn. There is no water. The sewer is destroyed. Wells will not be dug. Yes, and it is impossible to pay off this. The Volga is on fire, imagine, the water is on fire. Depots with oil, gasoline smashed, and all this is on fire on the water. The berths are broken and burning. The shore is on fire, where the fuel has spilled. Civilian people run to the Volga to cross to the other side, but everything is on fire, there are no boats. There are many wounded,

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parts. The bastard bombs all this: crossings, and ferries, and everything that floats along the Volga. Have you seen the picture "Eruption of the volcano - on Vesuvius"? I didn't think that I would get out alive, and even here it's not sweeter. Our affairs are very bad, I can say, it can't get any worse.

"Many troops are coming from Siberia, and we must, finally, detain the enemy," I remarked.

- Something is not visible what is going to happen if Stalingrad cannot be held. The Germans broke through to the Volga in the northern part of the city, fighting is going on in the territory of the tractor plant. And we retreat. Where? To the Volga? Yes, doctor, we will not solve the issues of war with our ranks. Let's wait - we'll see if we live. As long as you bring the dishes. I'll wait.

I need alcohol for medical purposes. He made do with the crumbs he received. Many begged for a drink, but there was nothing to give. They gave out milliliters for work. If they offer, I decided to take it, it will come in handy, of course. I myself still, one might say, do not drink alcohol, could not stand it and did not feel joy when I tried it. Why people are so drawn to this potion, I do not understand. I went to the car where my belongings were. Included was an empty square jar of half a liter and a bottle of two hundred grams of alcohol, also empty. Yes, the flask on the belt contained seven hundred grams. With this dish I went to the food warehouse car. Nikolaev was there. The storekeeper Lukyanov has already poured this liquid for some people at the direction of the foreman and at his own discretion. The sergeant ordered to pour me too. When he saw these bottles in my hands, he grinned, shrugged his shoulders and said:

"We need containers here, not these vials, doctor. I have barrels; and you stretch for drops.

— No other dishes, enough for me.

The alcohol was poured from the barrel into a bucket, and Lukyanov poured it into a mug. He was already tipsy. He filled my dishes and, winking, said to come, pour more.



Long after midnight, people were spinning around the grocery car. There was loud talk and laughter. Lukyanov was generous, and apparently no one left him with an empty bowler hat. The Red Army repairman Vernigora clung to him as an assistant. Lately, one could often see him near the kitchen. Either he voluntarily chopped wood, then he willingly went on water and became his own person there. And that day he tried to appease everyone with alcohol through Lukyanov, while he himself was sober. A light shone through the curtains of the window from the commander's car, where, in addition to him, Kalmykov and Titov, there was also senior lieutenant Kitaichik, authorized by the special department. He was also attached to our company. Previously, he rarely came, but the last few days he was constantly. Sergeant-major Nikolaev cruised between the food warehouse car and the commander's flight, and after midnight he stayed there for a long time. The people of the company also did not sleep for a long time. From the slots of the flyers, light broke through - illuminated by batteries. Some people sat in small groups near the cars, sipped alcohol, ate whatever they had, and had conversations. Long after midnight, heavy with alcohol, people began to fall asleep. They lay where someone had to or where they fell down. Manko and I went to rest comparatively early. They lay in the back of an open side car. We did not drink alcohol with him. I showed him what I had brought and offered to drink from the flask, but he refused. Was not in the mood. They lay for a long time, talking about different things. The dream did not last long.

Wednesday. August 26, 1942 DIVERSION.

Woke up from the strongest explosion that threw us in the back. The blast shook everything around. Manko and I fell off the car. They pulled boots on bare feet. Lie down. And subsequently, a series of smaller explosions continued in short intervals. This happened not far from us. It became light from the flashing glow. What's happened? "Is the enemy landing force operating?" thought flashed. They didn't understand what was going on. The sanitary bag was in hand. The pistol was

to me. Pulled out of the holster. Didn't find a pilot. More weaker explosions continued nearby, the glow grew.

"The ammunition and fuel were blown up there," Manko came to his senses.

From the back of the car came an indistinct stream of inarticulate words interspersed with more distinct swearing. Kostya Naumov fell over the side of the car towards us.

— What do you have here? he squeezed out, holding on to the side of the car body. — Where are my boots? Give it up! - he turned to the driver, who was standing nearby, sleepy, confused. Kostya could not tear himself away from the body - so he kept upright, comprehended what was happening, and did not understand, just as we sober ones did not understand. They were so frightened and confused that no opinion came to mind. Everyone tried to understand what had happened and what was happening. Enemy landing, which they dreamed of, bombing? The flame kept growing, the explosions continued, more dull with flashes of fire. Against the backdrop of the glow, cars were clearly visible on the sides of the ravine, a rare bush and single figures of people.

- Warehouses are dirty! voices were heard. Our warehouses!

- That yak is his, take shovels! Manko finally came to his senses. - Behind me!

And grabbing a shovel in one hand, with a pistol in the other, he ran in the direction of the glow. Naumov stood still, holding on to the side of the car with his hands, and, cursing, asked:

- Where are my boots, damn it?

"They are standing near you, comrade junior lieutenant," answered the driver of the car, who was standing next to me, and, grabbing a carbine from the cab, ran after Manko.

Naumov sank to the ground and tried to wrap the footcloth around his leg, but he did not succeed, it kept slipping. In this state, I left him near the car and ran with a sanitary bag to the area of the brigade's warehouses.

Our Red Army men and commanders fussed around. There was also a company commander, a commissar. Few survivors

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Our ammo trucks were pulled away from this place. The ground was burning, soaked in gasoline and diesel fuel. Cars burned out. They couldn't be helped.

Ammunition in boxes lying not far away on the ground in one of the recesses of the ravine remained unharmed. It was believed that five people must have died - burned without a trace in cars. They found the bodies of three people and two were with burns. They said that they woke up from a strong explosion. Their car, on which there were barrels of diesel fuel, was also on fire. The cause of the fire remained unclear. It was rumored that someone had drunk a cigarette butt: he threw it away. Diversion is not ruled out.

Senior lieutenant Kitaichik, authorized by the special department, was engaged in this. And he, and the commander, and the commissar, and many were still under the influence of a night of drinking, but most quickly sobered up. Strengthened the security of the remains of the warehouse. Sand was thrown over the fires.

Despite the explosions and the fire, not everyone got up yet. He helped the burned and went to the kitchen. Kharitonov hovered around the boilers. The water was already boiling. Needed food for breakfast. In the evening I could not get it and, keeping up with many others, I helped myself to fall asleep early. Once again I went to the grocery car, but could not wake Lukyanov. Reported to the attendant. Together they tried to wake the storekeeper, but he was dead drunk. They asked me to bring him to his senses. He lay flat on the floor by the door of the booth. He did not react to clapping, tingling of the body. They pulled him to the side of the car, poured water over his head, and it did not help, he did not regain consciousness.

The sentry near the food warehouse and the kitchen, the Red Army soldier Nagiba, was relatively sober, and the company officer on duty asked him what happened that night.

"Everyone quietly got drunk, and you yourself saw everything.

Indeed, why does he ask the sentry when he himself should have seen what was happening. Or overslept?

Single and small groups of Red Army soldiers were already wandering around the territory. many faces  
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but they were "rumpled", walked, still staggering, some were sleeping and did not know about what had happened - they had drunk so much that they did not even react to the explosions.

Lieutenant on duty Zavgorodny decided to report to the commander on Lukyanov's condition and ask how to get food. The commander ordered to build a company on alert. A little more than half of the personnel became part of the ranks, mainly those who were on fire. Some people were brought in, holding them by the elbows.

The Red Army soldiers in the ranks looked very ridiculous. The enemy was advancing, perhaps bypassed us. Our troops at the cost of their lives delayed his rapid advance. And what are these soldiers capable of? What happened to these, in fact, good, executive people,

who are now only a few hours apart from the cruel, advancing enemy? No one is going to surrender to the enemy, but how to resist in such a state? Who will drive the cars? Who will sit behind the wheel in such a state as to at least run away from the enemy?

The commander asked the sentry what happened at night. He reported that all night long people, in groups and alone, approached the food truck, and Lukyanov poured out a certain portion of alcohol for everyone at will. And then, in the midst of complete silence, this explosion and fire broke out. There were no strangers. The Red Army soldier Vernigora and his friend Kikhtenko helped Lukyanov pour alcohol.

The commander ordered me to bring Lukyanov to his senses and put him in front of the ranks. He gave two Red Army men to help. He poured some water into a mug, added a few drops of ammonia and poured the contents of the mug into his mouth. He kind of came to his senses. They took him under the armpits and dragged him and set him up. He was somehow kept upright, standing staggering on one leg, the other was set aside. He had a very strange posture, his upper half of his body moved, but he kept himself in an upright position, as if with soles glued to the ground.

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The commander spoke:

"The soldiers of our brigade bleed, hold the enemy's onslaught until their last breath, die, but do not retreat. The brigade lost a lot of people and equipment in the battles, but did not lose itself and, as a combat unit, holds the defense. And you cheated on her, betrayed her. Shame on you and contempt! Lost warehouses with ammunition and fuel. People died. The counterintelligence representative will find out who did it. What have you become? Worse than cattle. We urgently need to leave for a new place, dig ourselves in and prepare defense lines for the remnants of the brigade. And you can't drive!

He quickly followed along the line and, jabbing his palm into the chest of everyone, shouted:

- You, Kukhlenko, you, Byashirov, you, Zavgorodny, damn it, commander! - he came close to him, took him by the breast, pulled his face almost close to his own and said: - You scoundrel, Zavgorodny! At such a time, being on duty, get drunk and let the company drink. I'm sorry! You will go to court martial! —and pushed him away.

- I'm taking you off duty. Take duty to Senior Lieutenant Dyakov. And such a fate awaits you, Naumov!

"I'm nothing, just a little.

- Silence! You need to drive cars, but you are not able to. The German is coming. Decided to surrender to the Germans?! Lukyanov got everyone drunk to put the company out of action. And he put the company out of action so that the enemy would capture us like lambs. Changer! - he threw Lukyanov and again turned to the ranks: - With the power given to me, I sentence Lukyanov for incapacitating the personnel of the company in front of the advancing enemy to be shot.

He pulled the pistol out of its holster with his right hand, took Lukyanov by the collar with his left hand, and led him away from the ranks into one of the branches of the ravine into the bushes. Limping, clumsily, Lukyanov followed obediently, stumbling forward, pushing

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given by the commander. After some time, two shots rang out in the bushes, and the commander returned to the formation, trying to get into the holster with a pistol on the move and before the formation. Noah couldn't do it, apparently, he was worried. Then he moved the holster to his stomach, put the pistol in it. This instantly sobered everyone up, people began to realize the seriousness of the situation.

"The fate of Lukyanov awaits everyone, if such a thing permits. Everyone who is not able to come up and get into the car should be left in place, not taken with you. Let the German talk to them. The commissar, the commander of the auto company and the doctor will check the drivers and find out who is able to drive. Drunk people should not be allowed to drive.

I was ordered to go to Lukyanov. He went into the bushes and saw Lukyanov lying face down, his body trembling with sobs. Looked it over. There was no wound. Pants were wet from fear or even from the night. He tried to say something, but could not: his jaws were pounding, his body was shaking, he was crying out loud. The commander, of course, fired into the air.

Mezentsev was immediately appointed storekeeper instead of him. The food truck, which held the alcohol, was locked up and the commissar took the key. K. sent a sentry to the car. I had to sober a lot of people with ammonia.

The enemy bypassed us on the right and advanced far to the northeast to the Volga, Stalingrad. We ended up in a bag or surrounded. Parts of our brigade were somewhere south of us, apparently still in the Zetas. The commander left for the brigade headquarters. Everyone was extremely tense, twitchy. The situation was not known. Many were tormented by remorse and shame for the general drunkenness. The drivers were divided into cars, some were removed. There were not enough sober drivers. Commanders and auto technicians were attached to some cars as drivers. They assigned the order of march in the marching column. While we all stood still, waiting for the command.

The commander arrived and ordered to urgently pull out the cars to follow to a new location. Company

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stretched out in a marching column and the cars set off on their way to the north. Again dust, endless steppe. The earth cracked from the heat, which has not known a single rain lately.

By evening, the company arrived and settled in the village of Blinnikov. The remnants of the brigade's warehouses and a number of vehicles from other units were pulled up there. The technical support company, the last unit of the brigade, went ahead, or rather, retreated, ran away first. And where? From the advancing enemy to the enemy who has broken through ... And where is he, who has broken through? Are there escape routes and where? Everyone was perplexed. Haven't moved on from last night. People were occupied with the questions of the night explosion and fire. Most agreed that this was the work of enemy hands. Deaver Sia.

Thursday. August 27, 1942 TRAITORS.

Slept on a stretcher. They were on the ground under the car. The driver was asleep in the cab. Frozen. The nights were cool, with lots of dew. What promises us a new day? Sergeant Major Nikolaev came up to me, greeted me, offered his hand and said confidentially:

— There is a case, doctor, step aside. The alcohol was all sealed up, and I was ordered to take it right after breakfast and hand it over to the control company. There is part of the brigade warehouse. I managed to pour one canister and I ask you to take it for safekeeping. Let us have our "NZ".

- Where will I keep it? My property is in an open side car. I can't sit next to her.

- I have no one to trust, they will drink, bastards. Take it while I take alcohol to the brigade. I'll come and take it. Please do this. You must, you understand, you must save a little for yourself. I kept thinking about where to put the canister, and didn't come up with anything else.

- Maybe put in some kind of flyer. To, Sargsyan or Dyakov?

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- You'll see the hell later, they won't give it back, and that's it. I'll bring it to you, put it on your property, no one will guess. Think it's gasoline.

- Bring what you can do.

And he brought a canister of alcohol for storage, which he put on the car with other canisters of gasoline. Wouldn't confuse. So as not to accidentally fill it, I made a note on the canister - I tied a piece of bandage to the handle.

From the Ugra, they began to look for the Red Army soldier Vernigora and another repairman, by the name of Kikhtenko. This question was raised by senior lieutenant Kitaichik, authorized by the special department. When they began to clarify, it turned out that they had not been seen since yesterday morning, after the ill-fated booze and fire. Vernigora has become familiar in the company over the past two weeks with his not entirely healthy conversations, and sometimes just hostile ones. He was very active last night. Somehow he got into Lukyanov's confidence, got access to alcohol and tried to get everyone drunk. Kikhtenko was an inconspicuous, hardworking, executive Red Army soldier, about forty years old. His family was under occupation somewhere in Volhynia. Vernigora and Kikhtenko somehow became friends, or rather, the first subordinated the second. They lived and slept together. Colleagues in the repair platoon, who came into contact with them more often than others, suggested that they had gone to the Germans. They began to recall that Vernigora was talking about crossing the front line and returning to his native places. This was when the enemy was dropping leaflets and at other times. To the indignation of those around him, he got off with a joke, saying that he wanted to test them, or said that he was thinking out loud for himself how to save his life for his family and relatives. This hoped to influence others.

After the conversation, it became known that Vernigora did not get into the company during the formation of the brigade, but stuck on the way to the front after Marinovka. Nobody from the headquarters of the brigade sent him to our company. He stuck on forged documents, became on allowance and, not very

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lurking, conducted enemy propaganda. It was an enemy infiltrator. The authorities followed him, found out this person and were supposed to expose him, but he got ahead of him and disappeared, pulling only one Red Army soldier with him. He failed to win the rest over to his side. There was no doubt that the explosions and fire were the work of his hands. All day long, only indignant conversations were heard on this occasion. The commander also spoke. Called on everyone to be vigilant, especially the communists and Komsomol members.

I asked Senior Lieutenant Kitaichik why the authorities gave Vernigora the opportunity to commit an act of sabotage and hide, when many in the company already understood that he was not our man and was repeatedly called names and condemned for provocative conversations? He told me confidentially that they knew everything about his conversations, followed him and should have already contacted his boss, but they delayed the isolation a little, which he took advantage of.

Friday, August 28, 1942 HOT TALK.

The enemy has been making desperate attempts to advance towards Stalingrad, and so far he has succeeded in this, with heavy losses for him. Its avant-garde tank and motorized units broke through to the northeast of our location, occupied the Tundutovo station and are developing an offensive in the direction of Krasnoarmeysk. Our drivers used to go there for ammunition, fuel and food for the brigade. It became known that the fighting was already going on somewhere to the north of us, in the area of Ivanovka. We were clearly in a bag. This grouping of Germans cut us off from the Volga, and if it joins with the northern one, which went to the Volga, then the sack will be slammed shut, and we will find ourselves surrounded, which was feared in recent days. A gloomy prospect. I think everyone understands this, but they don't talk about it. From the drivers who arrived for ammunition and fuel, they learned that heavy fighting was going on in the Zeta area. In addition to the remnants of the brigade, there is part of the army reserves of our 64th Army.

In the evening after dinner, political officer Titov gathered the personnel of the company for another lightning strike. He said that the enemy, bleeding, was rushing towards Stalingrad, throwing more and more forces into the attack. They are not endless. And he will find his grave here, on the Volga land, where our troops are staunchly defending themselves, destroying him. And our tank brigade, its remnants, showed exceptional heroism and selflessness in the defense of Zeta. All attempts by the enemy to take over the Zetas are unsuccessful. The 1st battalion of the brigade destroyed twelve enemy tanks, having only five vehicles and one anti-tank battery. Captain Rustikov was especially distinguished. He personally knocked out two enemy tanks. The commander of the 2nd tank battalion, senior lieutenant Gavrilenko, repeatedly took the tanks out of hiding and went on the attack on the advancing enemy motorized infantry, inspiring the battalion personnel with his example. The commander of a tank company, Lieutenant Mikhailov, went on the attack nineteen times. Military technician 1st rank Pak, mechanic-driver foreman Lesovsky especially distinguished themselves — they destroyed the firing points and manpower of the enemy with tank firepower and caterpillars, making a raid on his battle formations.

Lieutenant Leikin knocked out two enemy tanks, delaying his advance in the area occupied by our troops. The company commander Martynenko, junior lieutenant Kalashnikov, the platoon commander junior sergeant Nazarov laid down several dozen enemy soldiers and officers in front of their positions, holding the occupied lines. The Red Army soldier Badylevsky penetrated into the area where the enemy was located, climbed into a wrecked German tank, deployed the turret and opened fire on the enemy motorized infantry. There, a group of our repairmen, headed by military technician Voropaev, contributes a lot to the success of the tankers.

The commissar paused, cleared his throat, and continued:

— Hear about the shameful incident that took place in the brigade. The signalman of the control company, the Red Army soldier Steinberg, buried his party card in the ground, fearing that he would fall into the hands

Germans. For his cowardice, selfishness and alarmism, he was expelled from the members of the CPSU / b / and handed over to the court of a military tribunal. And on our conscience is a shameful fact. An enemy spy lived among us. Ate, slept with us. He led subversive conversations, persuaded our people to go over to the enemy, to surrender as prisoners, to return to their families. And no one dared to bring him by the collar to the special officer. Shame on us all. He provoked a booze, and would have presented us all to the enemy like on a plate, but, fortunately, he did not calculate. Explosions and arson of fuel are the work of his hands. This incident should raise our vigilance even higher, so that no tricks of the enemy will fail.

In the evening we decided to have a little rest, Manko and Naumov spread an awning on the ground near the cars. I scattered overcoats, capes. Lie down. Gen and Sargsyan joined us. Dyakov and the foreman "Baby" approached.

And in our circle a discussion of Steinberg's act began. We came to the conclusion that the sergeant did not change his oath, to the Motherland, not an enemy of our people. He showed cowardice. Fear, as they say, clouded the mind. A Jew cannot be a traitor to the Motherland and go over to the side of the Nazi invaders. This is contrary to common sense. He has no place in the party, but in the ranks, on the battlefield, he will not let you down, he will try to atone for his guilt - his cowardice.

The life of the Jews and their fate are inextricably linked with the fate of the Soviet Union. The country will endure, and the Jews can count on existence as a people, a nation. God forbid - will be defeated, and the Jews will be finished. Every Jew is aware of this and, not sparing his life, will fight until complete victory over the enemy. He should not have been subjected to a military tribunal for this act.

Saturday, August 29, 1942 NO PLACE FOR A WOMAN IN WAR.

The Zetas have been subjected to repeated enemy air raids and artillery fire. Our troops held their positions. The order came from the command

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blowing by the 64th Army to withdraw from the battle and to withdraw the 254th Tank Brigade to Stalingrad. The brigade surrendered the defense site in Zeta and the remaining tanks with crews to the 13th Tank Brigade, which arrived to replace it. It left the zone of massive bombing and artillery strikes to the north, and by noon the remnants of it advanced to the Koshary-Blinnikov line, where they took up defensive positions. What to defend? Not a single tank. Several mortars and one anti-tank battery remained in the motorized rifle machine-gun battalion. The personnel have machine guns, carbines and pistols. Our two repair teams arrived in Blinnikov, Vanina and Voropaeva.

The enemy was advancing. To the east of us and to the north-east, no more than two or three kilometers away, an artillery cannonade was heard, now subsiding, now intensifying.

The tank brigade had lost its combat effectiveness, and it was planned to withdraw it from the fighting for re-formation. But in the afternoon it became known that the brigade had received reinforcements: two companies with T-70 tanks had arrived. They were given to the 1st battalion. This is already a lot, which means that more battles are coming. And we hoped that we were going to form.

From our company, a group of Red Army men with commanders was singled out to help the sappers for the construction of defensive structures. The brigade was ordered to take up defense here and delay the advance of the enemy. There were many parts in the village. More passed us to the north. These units and formations of the 64th Army retreated to the internal defensive line, to the southern outskirts of Stalingrad.

A car was moving from the company to the brigade headquarters. I decided to go to the medical platoon. Get dressing material, tires. There was no real need for them. There were still stocks. But perhaps I was looking for an excuse to see Maya.

At the headquarters of the brigade, I met the military assistant of the control company Gomelsky Semyon. He looked smart, smart. We hugged.

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It's good to see you alive and well. Tell us how we're doing. You are near command. What awaits us? Will they take us out for reformation?

As long as we fight. I'll tell you in secret that our business is a seam. The brigade was ordered to take up defense and cover the retreat to Andreevka of the divisions with which it interacted: the 204th and two more - the 138th and 29th. They should take up defense closer to the city.

We are almost surrounded. What will a brigade with two companies of tanks do? There is nothing to fight - I noticed.

"Two companies means something. Something else will be given. Apparently, you need to withdraw the army from the bag, so as not to fall into the environment. And we can lay bones here.

Our position is critical. We found ourselves in a sack, the mouth of which is still open for Stalingrad, where we are being sent. To the northwest, the 6th army of Paulus entered the city and reached the Volga.

Together with them, a little to the south, the Romanian, Italian and Hungarian armies are advancing.

From the south to Stalingrad along the Volga, ahead of us, the armies of Hoth and Manstein are striving. In parallel with them, we retreat to the city - the 64th and 62nd armies and many other units and formations, weakened in past battles.

The enemy is close to capturing Stalingrad, which will close the mouth of the bag and lead to an inevitable catastrophe, the consequences of which can decide the outcome of the battle in favor of the enemy.

- Tell me, where is the medical platoon? You need to get dressing material.

- Not far from here. I'm going there, let's go - I'll show you. They didn't turn around. All in cars.

From the main street turned into an alley. In one of the yards and along the fence there were ambulances and transport vehicles. Found Gasan-Zade.

- Why did you come? he greeted me with a high, shouting voice. Have you brought the wounded again? There is nowhere to take them, and I do not know where to send them. They said wait for instructions.

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The sick are coming, the wounded are being taken. Ours and others. How to work and what to expect?! They themselves do not know in what light! Why are you silent? I say everything, but I don't give you a word to say. Hello. Tell me why you came

- Hello. Nice to see you alive and well.

- What will happen to me? I am lucky. That's what my grandmother said when she took me into the light of day. Until I made a mistake. Glad to see you alive and well. I hope further. What did you want from me? Or came to Maya?

— I want to get bandages, splints.

— Sorry. Go to Shepshelev. He will grumble, but pay no attention. Say what I sent. Write a demand and get it.

I found Shepshelev, said why I came. Without saying a word, he led me to the onboard car and dropped a gauze bag - a set of tires and a plywood box - a set of dressings.

- Is there any transport? How and where will you take it?

I'll leave it here for now and go get the car. She is at the brigade headquarters.

Began to look for a place where you can put the kits. Picked up one and carried it to the house, at the porch of which hung plywood with a red cross. Doctors Zoya Lozhkina and Maya Weinstein came out of the house onto the porch.

— Can I leave the kits while I go to get the car? I found.

"Of course, please," Lozhkina curtsied. She looked at Maya and laughed.

I'm confused. I was very embarrassed. He stood with a box in his hands, all looked at Maya. Suddenly he realized that he had not even said hello.

- Hello! - I said.

They laughed again, and Lozhkina ran to the cars.

"Put the box down and bring the second set," Maya said.

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I went for the second set, put it on top of the first and walked over to Maya.



- Hello, Maya.

- You already said hello. What a funny, awkward you are, - she came closer to me, fastened a button on my tunic. I stopped breathing, and she continued: — Thank you for the manicure set. Just showed the girls today. Very pretty and seems to be comfortable, but I haven't used it yet. I keep for better times. How well washed in the Zetas at your mistress. Thank you. And the hostess prepared delicious cakes. It was necessary to happen a raid by enemy aircraft. I would like to wash myself even now, even if I take a dip in the river or wash myself off the sweat and dust by the well. Where and how? Didn't they bring a hostess here? she asked slyly.

- Not yet, I haven't.

- It's better for you, peasants, but how about us? You can't hide from your eyes in clothes. We think in a shed to wash. Zoya ran to the children to beg them to bring water, even if it was cold.

I stare at her and remain silent. She also fell silent.

- Am I scary?

I was silent.

- Why are you silent?

I looked at Maya and thought how hard it is for a woman in the war. War is a man's business. And how hard it is for a woman in the war. A man will easily undress to the waist, take a bath at any well, reservoir, and perform his natural needs right there on the wheel of a car or under any tree. What about a woman? With her physiological periods, with her hygienic needs to wash or wash. How difficult and often impossible it all is. Everyone around is waiting for a smile from her, an affectionate word, and she is tormented by how to cope with her natural needs, to keep at least some parts of her body clean.

I kept looking at Maya. Eyes, so expressive, unusual, as I always saw them, and now they are growing

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zealous, helpless, in a special sad way, as if saying: "I am here, fate has determined me here, and what can I do?"

- Why are you silent and looking at me like that, has it changed a lot?

"You just don't belong here, Maya. Not my sisters, relatives. Not a single woman has a place in the war, where it is unbearably difficult for a man.

I feel sorry for her as a sister who has taken on an unbearable burden that is incompatible with the feminine essence, with the purpose of a woman. I would put this burden on my shoulders without hesitation.

She spread her hands, which expressed better than words: "Like, what to do?"

— What are you thinking about? Somehow your silence is embarrassing.

And I talked:

"I would take you to my native Belorussia, to the forest of the Polissya region, where I would place you in a light tower, near which a clear stream flows, the water of which you can drink and in which you can swim. I would order all the animals to please and cherish you. Bears - to wear honey, lingonberries with strawberries, fresh fish; wolves - fresh meat, not canned food or concentrates; chanterelles - chickens; bunnies - fresh potatoes, carrots and cabbage; squirrels - nuts in chocolate:

mermaids - fresh bread and lush rolls, not crackers; and the birds would sing magical melodies, or just waltzes and tangos, if you like.

Her eyes lit up with such happiness, as if a child had been presented with a Christmas tree lit up with lights.

- And what place will you determine for yourself at the tower?

- It's up to you. At least we are guards around, but if you call ...

Enough, dreamer! No more strength to listen.

And tears flowed from her warm eyes, no longer sad, radiating warmth and gratitude.

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- Run to you. And I have a lot to do. Thank you for your good wishes," she began to leave, stopped, returned to me, put her hands on my shoulders, pulled herself up on tiptoe, kissed me and said quietly: "Thank you very much, you entertained me and made me happy, thank you."

She turned and said from a distance:

- So that the trouble will pass you!

"And you too," I called out.

She disappeared into the house. I kept standing. I came to my senses, went to the headquarters, returned with the car, loaded the kits. Red Army soldiers and commanders crowded near the house with the red cross. Most in bandages. We drove to the headquarters, captured the commanders who were waiting there and departed for the location of the company.

All day and night, units and formations of the 64th Army retreated past us in the direction of Stalingrad. Two medical battalions passed, and behind them units of at least two divisions, weakened and exhausted, passed the remnants of the cadet regiments [of the Roznensky, Vinnitsa and Zhytomyr infantry schools. In the Zhytomyr cadet regiment, which occupied the defense in the zone of action of our brigade at the 74th kilometer siding, about ten percent of the personnel remained alive. The head of the school, the commander of the cadet regiment, Colonel Gusev, also died.

Artillery fire and bomb explosions to the south of us began to be heard more and more distinctly. We have become accustomed to the sounds of cannonade to the northwest of our location. The enemy was advancing from the south. Our troops are forced to retreat to new lines. It was not possible to keep the defense of Stalingrad on the distant approaches. We all retreat. Parts are pretty beat up, but could still fight. Or did you decide to keep them, replenish them? To cover the retreat of other units means to take over the meeting with the enemy and, if possible, delay him. A hard fate and this time fell to the brigade. Few people left, few weapons. Two marching tank companies... Not strong enough for such a task. Everyone in the brigade understood that they would have to fight to the death, that the enemy

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it is necessary to delay at least for some time, until the retreating parts of the divisions on the southern outskirts of the city organize the defense.

The divisions of the brigade dug trenches and ditches in the second half of the day and all night, buried equipment, and prepared to meet the enemy. And by all went and went troops.

Repair teams of the company were sent directly to battle formations, to positions where they put equipment and weapons on alert, brought ammunition and fuel.

The company commander summoned the commanders and sergeants - squad commanders.

When we all gathered, he announced:

- After the capture of Tundutovo, the Germans moved east of us to Ivanovka and went to Gavrilovka. Our units are withdrawing from the south, and by morning his tank and motorized columns are expected at Blinnikov. Our brigade was ordered to cover the withdrawal of units and divisions of our 64th Army. The task for the brigade, as you know, is very difficult. No one will leave their positions. The brigade commander ordered our company to withdraw to a new concentration area west of Beketovka. Blinnikov should leave in an hour. I give 40 minutes to load the cars. Faulty cars to take in tow. I will lead the column. Disperse!

An hour later, a convoy of RTO vehicles left Blinnikov.

Sunday, August 30, 1942 "PLANNED" WITHDRAWAL?

In the last week, in the most difficult military situation, the technical support company moved ahead of the brigade not towards the front, but in the opposite direction. This was possible only in retreat. Before everyone else, she was removed from her place and moved to a new area of deployment. Then the rest of the brigade units approached us, and sometimes they did not have time to reach us. So it is today: we were the first to leave Blinnikov.

We went in the dead of night to the north, northeast, parallel to the enemy howl advancing from us to the right

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scam We walked in the stream of retreating troops along some country roads. The commander decided to turn off the main road and wait until dawn. The whole column moved off to the side for half a kilometer. We stopped, organized a circular defense. The drivers were given a nap. Met the dawn in the cockpit. Morning was cold. Even in an overcoat, it's cold.

Suddenly, the silence was broken by deaf explosions of bombs and distinct artillery fire, explosions of shells and mines in the area of the main road from which they turned off and behind.

It can be seen that the Germans have approached the village, and the brigade is fighting. We moved away from Blinnikov only a few kilometers. The entire staff was in anxious expectation. Germans ahead and to the side. Ours are fighting from behind. How long will they last? If the enemy breaks into our location, how to defend ourselves? ..

And past us, along the ravine, and along the main road, troops retreated to the northeast, to Stalingrad. Cars with people, guns, foot columns of fighters in full gear, some of them carrying anti-tank rifles on their shoulders. There were silent, downcast, with lowered heads, weary warriors. The troops were retreating... Ambulances and airborne vehicles with the wounded were walking in the general stream. Many lightly wounded were on foot. Some of them were picked up by passing transport. We walked quickly. They were in a hurry to get out of the bag. They said that the German was sitting on his shoulders, rushing from behind. How are ours? We were waiting for the commander. Were ready to go. All the retreating troops walked and walked past. The echoes of the close battle now grew, then subsided, but did not stop. The commander and a repair team arrived with a flying machine and two airborne vehicles. Cars from the brigade units came up. They reported that ours got involved in heavy battles with the advancing enemy, retreated to the southeastern outskirts of Blinnikov, and there they held back his advance. Enemy aviation is paving the way for its troops, knocked out two tanks.

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The echoes of the battles were heard closer and closer. There is a difference between machine-gun and machine-gun shots. The kitchen has arrived with water. Picked up somewhere. Some water was distributed to the personnel for drinking. They started cooking dinner. Single vehicles from the brigade units also approached.

Soon a convoy of vehicles, accompanied by several T-70 tanks, stopped near the ravine. It was a control company, a medical platoon with the wounded. I went to them. All their belongings were loaded onto cars. Nothing was deployed. Not a single tent. There were many wounded. Still brought up. They were processed on a tarpaulin spread on the ground, some on a stretcher. I joined in to help. Tires were put on, bandages adjusted. When they finished processing the wounded, they started loading. The heavier ones were loaded into an ambulance, the rest into open side cars. The military feldsher Shepshelev was ordered to accompany the convoy. He kept lamenting: "Where to take them, who will take them from me, what other roads are free?" He was afraid that he would fall with them to the enemy. And his fears were not without reason. The situation was not known. Our drivers yesterday brought ammunition and fuel from Beketovka. I advised him to take the wounded there through Nariman to Varvarovka. Ivanovka has already been reliably captured by the Germans. The fighting went on near Gavrilovka yesterday. Our troops retreated to Stalingrad along this path. There was no other way.

Maya approached me.

- Come, I'll water you. Your hands are covered in blood. Look, there are blood stains on the front of the tunic and on the side.

He worked without a dressing gown and smeared his tunic with the blood of the wounded. It was only then that I noticed how tired Maya, Zoya Lozhkina and all the others were. Their bathrobes are covered in blood, their matted and dirty hair stuck out from under their caps, their faces are sweaty.

"Let me water you," I turned to Maya.

- No. We need to wash, at least up to the waist: we are so sweaty and dirty, it's disgusting to ourselves.

- Gee and how? There is no water here.

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- We have water. The boilers are full and thermos. We wash between cars, fence ourselves with a tarpaulin. They adapted. They waved their hand in shame. We are closing, of course.

The orderlies carried the wounded with water.

Will you be able to get out of the fight?

- As long as we retreat. Who knows how things will turn out. Well, Maya, I have to run.

"Yes, yes, I delayed you.

"I would stay with you forever.

- Go, go, see you again, God forbid, see you!

She waved her right hand and began to move away from me.

"Stop being nice, don't seduce my girls, boy." There are many like you here, and I have only two or three of them and counted them. Come on, come on. Do not be offended, come, - one can say that Hasan-Zade drove me away.

Maya has already run away. I went to my company. Will we meet again?

The cars were already pulled into a marching column and were ready to march. Part did not start — they drove around. We were in a hurry to get out of the area. To the right, far ahead of us, gunfire continued to ring out. The enemy is far ahead of us in this parallel race. Strange. The enemy is advancing, we are retreating and walking side by side in parallel. He also pressed on from behind us. He strove for Stalingrad, and we strove for him. So there were two streams of troops hostile to each other. Possessing the initiative, the enemy could cut off our retreat to the city, surround us and defeat us. But apparently he was in a hurry

to occupy the city and did not really take into account the retreating flow of our troops. Or were we not a hindrance to him? Our company, and the brigade as a whole, were a drop in the ocean, and what did this drop mean? And she clung to some area, withstood, together with her own kind, the assault shaft.

How far can you retreat? "Planned" departure? And at the beginning of the war, entire armies retreated, and when they were surrounded, they lost the ability to fight and, for the most part, surrendered with weapons, equipment, and food. Quite combat-ready units and connections

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nia were dying. If all these retreating troops are surrounded, they will be destroyed, because the scattered ones will not be able to resist. Our command must understand this. Maybe it would be more correct to turn these troops against the enemy. Death in battle, and not death in captivity, would facilitate the actions of the troops that will come to replace us. The enemy can be beaten, as they were convinced at the junction. The command is clear. It is not from my position to assess the situation, but the retreat is no longer perceived. It's time to take the initiative into your own hands. Otherwise - the collapse of everything. It is hard to even imagine what awaits us.

Monday, August 31, 1942 WE ALL ARE RETRACTING.

Only four tanks remained in the 254th tank brigade, a small number of personnel. A united group of repairmen was formed, consisting of two flying teams and an on-board vehicle with spare parts. There was no kitchen. There was no water either. Lieutenant Colonel Ivanov approached me and asked me to pour him one hundred grams of alcohol. I said that I only have denatured alcohol. He replied that this would work. And before that, he repeatedly turned to me, and I could not refuse him. He asked me for a pinch of soda, as he said, for show. I gave him a pinch of soda on a piece of paper and poured alcohol into a mug. He pretended to sprinkle soda on his tongue, holding the powder between his fingers in a piece of paper, and drank from the mug. He did this surrounded by Red Army soldiers, and no one realized that he was drinking.

He was always at the command post of the brigade or in the battalions. Before tank attacks, he personally checked the condition of the vehicles, the readiness of the crews, instructed the tank crews, and was directly involved in the technical support of the tanks. The tension was to the limit. Detente was needed, and he must have found it in this.

The last day of August 1942. The end of summer, dry and sultry. The vast steppe around, almost flat with patches of withered grass, without forest and shrubs to the horizon. We passed west of Gavrilovka. There was a great temptation

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stop by this village, drink water, but did not dare. It was believed that the Germans were already there. Apparently they weren't wrong. Artillery shells and mines began to burst along the road. The shelling was carried out from the side of Gavrilovka. Our column, as well as others, turned off the main road, increased their speed and left the shelling. We didn't have any wounded. Clouds of dust raised by vehicles blocked the road and the space around and hid targets from the enemy. Dust and sand ate into the body, eyes crunched on the teeth. More and more thirsty. The wells that came across along the way were empty. The remaining water in the flasks warmed up, it was possible to rinse the mouth with it. Militias, the remnants of defeated units that had left the battles, cars and wagons with the wounded, crowds of refugees, herds of cattle driven to the east - all this was on our way. There was a continuous roar: the roar of engines, the shouts of people, the crying of children, the growling of hungry and unwatered cattle. This stream moved towards Stalingrad, towards the Volga, as it was believed, away from the enemy, from bombing, but was tirelessly subjected to artillery fire and bombing from the air. Parts on these roads lost people, left broken, burning equipment. Militias and refugees died. The wounded were taken with them, many died without receiving timely medical care. Along the roads lay the corpses of people, horses and cattle. Those who succeeded - cut out pieces of meat from fallen animals, boiled them in buckets, pots. This supported their strength.

Long after noon the column approached Varvarovka. It was filled with our troops. Didn't see any locals. On the outskirts, they stood at the well. Half a bucket of water was collected, and then with sand. The commander decided to go in a column through the center of Varvarovka, and stopped near one well, where there was a lot of good-quality water. Rinse mouth, throat. They drank plenty of water. Never before have I enjoyed drinking water like this time. He warned everyone and he himself tried a lot not to drink right away, but it was in vain. Couldn't stop

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water was poured past the mouth on the whole of oneself, on the back of the head, on the head, washed face, neck. They filled the flasks, teapots, tanks and, without delay, left Varvarovka.

Again we were met by the boundless steppe. The mood got better. Although hungry since yesterday, they quenched their thirst. Many gnawed crackers, fortunately, there was something to soak them and drink them down. Suddenly, on a low-level flight, two Messerschmitts passed one after another and fired machine guns at a column of our vehicles. They turned off the road, the cars parted for different distances. On the road, one of our loaded on-board vehicles remained on fire. We had one dead, two wounded and one with a broken collarbone. He was injured during the shelling - he jumped off the car on the move. The last one helped, put bandages on. They took the body of the dead and wounded. The burning car was left on the road, and the convoy moved on. We walked quickly. They overtook other units, endless streams of civilians.

By the end of the day, we reached the village of Popovo and stopped south of it. We were overtaken by the remnants of our brigade. For the first time, perhaps, in all the time after the Zetas, the whole brigade gathered in one place. Our repair team also arrived with them. I handed over the wounded to the medical platoon.

Doctor Hasan-Zade turned on me: "Why did you bring them to me? Where do I put them? My wounded are dying, I need to operate, and we are all on wheels. Tell me what to do?" What could I tell him? I left him my two wounded and with a broken collarbone. The corpse of the deceased and two deceased in the medical platoon was buried near the village of Popovo under a volley of rifles from the department of the control company. They were buried in one grave. They dug in a column with nailed plywood, where the ranks, surnames and initials of the dead were indicated. In the Kalmyk steppe, another mound appeared with our buried soldiers.

Even before dark, the brigade headed east, in the direction of the village of Elkhi.

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Before the march, the company commander Mikhailovsky gathered the squad commanders and said that the brigade had been assigned a defense site among other units in the area of the village of Elkhi, where they should hold it to the last tank, anti-aircraft gun, mortar. (In accordance with the order of the Supreme Commander No. 227 - "Not a step back!"). The unarmed survivors may be withdrawn from combat to form a brigade.

Tuesday, September 1, 1942 BALKA ELKHI.

We moved at night across the steppe through a solid wall of dust and sand raised by cars. Sand and dust clogged the eyes, clogged the upper respiratory tract, the crunch of sand on the teeth did not stop. Finally, after midnight, we reached the indicated line. Service units, the remaining wheeled vehicles, flyers, tractors were located in the gully of the same name - Elkhi, rather wide and deep, with steep banks and smaller branches on the sides.

In a small section of it, a technical support company with all its vehicles was located. There were also two wandering cars with kitchens. Finally, two days later, they found us. Along the right edge of the beam, we were ordered to dig trenches with cells with communication passages. This is what we were doing. Somewhat ahead, artillery batteries were equipping their positions. Between them, our surviving and wrecked tanks were dug into the ground with an active gun or

machine gun, turning them into fixed firing points. This was their last resting place. Nearby, trenches with communication passages were being dug, mortar batteries of the neighbors on the defense were dug in. Along the beam, a unit of "Peterites" - anti-tank rifles, took up the defense.

The headquarters of the brigade, the control company and the medical platoon were located in the village of Elkhi. The personnel of the technical support company occupied the defense sector along the right

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the edges of the beam, next to the "Peteers", where cells and trenches were dug overnight with communication passages to the beam.

At dawn, enemy aircraft bombed the combat formations of our troops. It did not cause much damage - almost everything and everyone was buried in the ground. Get used to the bombing. They followed the planes, and it was clear where the bombs were falling. But each explosion, if not the body, then the soul was torn apart. There was no return fire. The anti-aircraft guns were silent. Perhaps they were not in this direction. Subsequently, intense enemy artillery and mortar fire, especially on the beam, began to disable equipment, vehicles caught fire, and there were wounded and dead. The place where shells and mines fell could not be determined in advance, and it was necessary all the time

snuggle into the ground.

Under the open sky, in one of the branches from the beam, he deployed a collection point for the wounded, where he provided them with first aid. I only had one stretcher. One of the awnings of a transport vehicle was spread on the ground. I put on the edge of the tarpaulin sets of tires and dressings, a set of "PF". A sanitary bag hung over his shoulder, as always. He begged the cook for a two-liter pot of water. That's all the equipment and equipment of the medical center. He crowned it all with a white flag with a red cross tied to a tree.

There were wounded not only from our company or brigade, but also from other units. After providing medical assistance, the wounded were sent east along the beam to any transport vehicles of other units passing by. Not everyone agreed to take the wounded. Military technician Gen Alexander stopped one airborne vehicle with a machine gun aimed at the driver, and the wounded were loaded under the machine gun. "Where to put them?" asked the head of the machine. He advised me to the first medical battalion or hospital that came across on his way. It was easy to advise, but in practice it was very difficult, as I have repeatedly seen. All this was not so easy. They have

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had their assignments. We had to deviate from the main route of movement, but what to do? The wounded had to be taken out of the battle area, especially since we were all retreating. Very reluctantly took the medical institutions of the wounded from other units and formations. They suffocated themselves. The volume of assistance was reduced due to the large flow of the wounded and the lack of even the slightest degree of suitable conditions. There was not enough transport for evacuation, because the troops retreated with cargo and equipment.

The retreating units passing by left the wounded behind. My protests didn't help. They left and left. It was not possible to send them to our medical platoon. He was somewhere in Elkhy, somewhat away from the beam. The commander knew that I was with the wounded, but neither people nor vehicles were allocated to me. Not up to me, apparently, it was. Those who were able to move independently went East along the bottom of the beam. They had to get out somehow. I could not move away from the wounded, I did not even create a supply of water. The water in the cauldron had long been drunk. There was only a few sips left in the flask, and the wounded all asked for a drink. And the sun was already hot.

After a short period of time, strong explosions shook the earth around. Enemy aircraft again bombed the area where our tank battalions and other subunits and units were located. It was not the first time they were bombed. Each new one was even more difficult to bear. The howl of planes entering and exiting their dives, the whistle of bombs flying towards the ground, and strong

close explosions in short periods of time, a hot blast wave and earth vibrations transmitted to the body had a terrible paralyzing effect. All of a sudden, everything around was quiet. It dawned on consciousness that the bombing had stopped, but there was no strength to get off the ground. It seemed that you would not have time to cling to it again and the fragments or the bullet that spared you this time would find you. But the silence instantly passed, as if the plugs were pulled out of the ear canals, and the sounds of war again filled my consciousness and sensation.

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We were also sprinkled with clods of earth, pebbles, fragments of objects. On the right side of the beam, we heard the noise of tank engines, more rare machine-gun and automatic bursts. At the top of the beam, the battle was ending. I moved up to the top. In the course of communication, I reached the trenches that we had previously dug. They were empty. Ours must have retreated, although until recently they had been on the defensive here. A senior lieutenant, chief of the company, lay down next to me.

- are ours? I asked him.

- Recently been here. Don't know. Perhaps they went to the cars.

I was frozen or petrified with horror or fear. Or maybe it wasn't fear. Some kind of detachment appeared, hands and feet became cottony. He did not try to crawl into the ravine, and his legs did not obey. Everyone peered ahead - counted. German tanks with white crosses, armored personnel carriers and wheeled vehicles with submachine gunners crawled past us to the east. Some cars had cannons on the trailer. We remain behind enemy lines...

Burning German and our tanks and vehicles smoked in the steppe. Military equipment was scattered around, twisted and twisted in different positions and with wheels up. The battle ended in our area and moved to the left of us. I was walking somewhere near the village of Yolkhi or even more to the east. The shooting was heard more and more muffled. The numbness has passed. It dawned on us that our people had retreated, or rather, they had fled and left us.

He began to descend along the route into the beam, called the chief financial officer.

The senior lieutenant remained lying down. He did not respond to the call. I went back to him, turned him face up. From the bridge of the nose, a small trickle of blood flooded the face. He was dead. Random bullet. In war, the vast majority of means of destruction are accidental for each individual and intentional for everyone. I pulled him out of the trench through the communication channel into the beam. Those who departed did not

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in large groups along the beam, the Red Army helped me carry his body to the collection point for the wounded. A group of "Peters" from another unit was moving past. Seeing a white flag with a red cross, they turned off the main beam towards me. They carried on a raincoat a seriously wounded by a shrapnel in the thigh, lowered him onto an awning and began to leave. I asked them not to leave him, that I would fix the bandage, put a splint on him and let them take him away, but they left him. The lieutenant answered, it is clear the senior of the group, that as with the rest of the wounded, you will do the same with ours, that they are in a hurry. And they left along the beam.

I ran from the branch to the main beam, to the parking lot of our company. There was no one. Cars, flying cars, a tractor left along the bottom of the ravine to the east. I returned to the wounded. He straightened the bandage and put a splint from the branches on the wounded man in the thigh. Only now I noticed what an unusual silence stood around. How could they leave me? Sat down and thought. How to get out? What could I think? It was possible to go to the east along the beam to our own people, but what about the wounded?

He sent two relatively lightly wounded on his own, they could walk. He told them that he would help them along the way. There were two of our wounded in the lower limbs, one in the shoulder and scapular region, seriously wounded in the thigh and the corpse of the head of the finance.



Along the bottom of the main beam, single individuals, several people at a time, and groups of Red Army soldiers loaded with anti-tank rifles, machine guns, and ammunition were hastily retreating to the east. I begged them to help carry out the wounded, but they were in a hurry, passing by. Someone left an incomplete flask of water, which turned out to be very valuable for the wounded on this sultry afternoon. The wounded in the thigh was especially hard. Continuously, silently groaned. Everyone asked for a drink. He drank that flask too. I decided to make a stretcher out of poles and a tarpaulin, on which it was possible to carry out the wounded and the body of the dead. He cut down two-meter sticks in the bush. The wounded man suggested that it would be more convenient to use a raincoat

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capas. They could be collected on the battlefield. Along the lines of communication, I got out of the beam to the trenches. German troops marched east across the steppe three hundred meters from the beam. When the column retreated to a more distant distance, I crawled my way to the places of the former artillery batteries. Next to the warped equipment lay the corpses of our Red Army soldiers. The bloodstains on the bodies were covered with large flies, which usually annoyed the animals. I picked up two machine guns with disks, a bag with hand grenades. He did not dare to take off the capas from the corpses, nor did he dare to touch the flasks on his belts. Hastily crawled back into the beam. He walked to the wounded with difficulty, his legs gave way, machine guns and a bag of grenades seemed an unbearable burden. He handed out machine guns to the wounded in the legs, and placed a bag with grenades next to them. Said what he saw. One of them suggested that I still pick up capas on the battlefield for a stretcher. Of these, it is most convenient to make a stretcher. I could not bring myself to return to the corpses again. They were surrounded by carbines, machine guns and grenades in case the enemy turned here. We have nothing else to do yet. We decided not to surrender alive. Three pieces of tarpaulin were cut off from the tent for the stretcher, approximately one meter by two in size. He brought pieces of wire, and they began to fasten the tarpaulin to the sticks with them. From time to time, the rumble of engines of cars and tanks broke into the silence to the right of the beam - German troops were moving east. Junkers and Heinkels flew over us with their characteristic intermittent rumble. We were heading towards Stalingrad. We spoke in whispers, it seemed that they could hear us. The groans of the man wounded in the thigh did not stop. He kept asking for water, only giving him water in small sips, and finally the water ran out. The stretcher was ready, but none of our people passed by. We were all waiting, hoping for something.

Damn thirst. I, a healthy person, was very thirsty, painfully thirsty. Despite the danger of our situation, the thought of water never left our minds. But what about the wounded? They had a big

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physiological need for water. It was excruciating to listen to the groans of the man wounded in the thigh and the only distinguishable words: "Drink, drink, drink ..." I still did not dare to search the corpses for a flask of water, although this thought cut deeper and deeper into my consciousness.

Somewhere latently a little thought still arose: "You can leave along the beam. Maybe you will still get out to your own. And immediately another thought echoed her: "How to leave the wounded and so helpless?" "You won't help them in any way and you yourself will perish." "I don't know these people. They are completely different to me. But for some reason I did not take a single sip of water and gave it all to them. Their lives are to some extent in my hands, and we have a common fate. To leave them is to betray... How then to live if it is destined to stay alive?

Apparently, one of the wounded guessed the course of my thoughts:

- You could, doctor, go out along the beam to your own and take the wounded man in the shoulder. He can walk.

— And how are you? And he will not reach - he lost a lot of blood, he will fall down on the way.

- The legs are whole - it will come. And pull us out onto the main road along the beam, disguise us and leave us. If ours will go, we will call out.

"Maybe you can get back with some transport for us," said another.

We were forgotten in the confusion. I think they will remember, I was not alone. They knew that with the wounded. If the road along the beam is not cut by the Germans, then they will come for us," I answered them, not quite confidently.

The sun was sinking towards the horizon. It was getting cooler, but I wanted to drink no less. It became unbearable to hear the groans of the seriously wounded man and the continuous plea: "Drink, drink, drink..." I left them and went to the steep edge of the ravine, climbed up and crawled to the positions of one of the artillery batteries. At already frozen corpses, I cut off two flasks from the belt, in which liquid was determined when shaken. Picked up one canteen,

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several horns with cartridges for the machine gun and crawled to his own. In one flask, fuller, there was warm, stale water, but it went in a circle. The other flask contained diluted alcohol. And he found a use.

We waited and hoped for something. Twilight followed the conversations. The silence was broken by the increasing rumble of the motor. It resounded from the east. I took the machine gun, went out of the branch to the main beam and hid. A tractor was moving along the beam, stopping where the company had previously been located. There was a voice:

- Doctor! Where are you there? I'm behind you!

I recognized the voice of Sasha Tsvetkov. He raised himself above the seat and peered in our direction.

Came out of hiding to him.

Are you with the wounded?

I nodded and showed with my hand where they were located.

"We need to get out quickly before the road is cut off.

They loaded the wounded, the body of the senior lieutenant, medical equipment, primitive stretchers, weapons, and followed the bottom of the beam to the east.

- Our people leave the battles and gather in Beketovka. And we will go there, - Sasha explained the situation to me.

We were already driving in the dark. By midnight we reached Beketovka without incident, where there was a concentration point for the remnants of the brigade. Upon arrival, he asked Sasha who had sent him for us. He replied that he had heard from the guys that the doctor had remained in the gully with the wounded, and hurried to the rescue. I wanted to appeal to the commander, but changed his mind, he was afraid that he would not allow it. Shared with Voropaev. He directed him to the commander. After some time, he told Voropaev that he had not found the commander, but decided to go.

"You didn't tell me anything, and I don't know anything about it," Voropaev told him.

Sasha made the decision on his own, went alone at his own risk already behind enemy lines to help out his comrades. Possibly, by this act he violated something statutory. And at the same time he did something heroic. He didn't think about

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feat. The comrade was in trouble, and he rushed to the rescue. I am not related to Sasha either by kinship or special friendship. We are just fellow soldiers, people of the same destiny and goal.

The vast majority of warriors tried to do their job as best as possible. Some did more than they could and became visible or humble heroes who remained in the shadows. Sasha belonged to the latter.

Wednesday, September 2, 1942 SOUTHERN OUTSIDE OF BEKETOVKA.

Throughout the night of September 2, the remnants of the brigade fought out of their positions, fighting off the pressing enemy, and gathered on the southwestern outskirts of Beketovka. The surviving commanders of battalions, companies and platoons or those who replaced them cruised along the planned routes for the exit of their units from the battles and sent them to the designated points. If possible, they pulled out equipment, mainly flying cars and vehicles - a means of transportation for personnel. Tanks, crumpled and burning, remained on the battlefield. Ammunition and an anti-tank battery were handed over to the 13th tank brigade. All fuel, and there was little left, was taken out with them. This happened under the bullets, shells and bombs of the advancing enemy. Soon there was a shortage of gasoline. The chief of fuel and lubricants failed to get it - he came with nothing. Warehouses were on fire, and fuel was given out according to a special schedule, in which our

part didn't fit.

By morning the situation had cleared up somewhat. All tanks, tractors, tractors remained on the battlefields on the outskirts of Stalingrad, as well as more than half of the wheeled and special flying machines. Most of the tankers were killed. Some of them, wounded and burned, ended up in the medical battalions of the divisions with which the brigade interacted, and in the field hospitals of the 64th Army, bypassing the medical and sanitary platoon, where the wounded were registered. Thus, many were among the missing. Remaining

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living members of tank crews in battalions could be counted on the fingers. More than two thirds of the composition lost tank battalions. Slightly less than half are the command and control company, engineer and sapper company. More than one third is a technical support company. In total, for less than a month, 363 people: killed - 83, wounded and burned - 181, missing - 99 (data from the form).

Subsequently, some of the missing somehow found the brigade and returned to the units. There was a special attraction of the recovered wounded to their units. They went to various tricks, taking great risks, sometimes deserting from hospitals or reserve units in order to return to their unit.

Lieutenant Colonel Ivanov read to the personnel of the company an extract from the order of the commander of the South-Eastern Front dated September 1, 1942, which stated that the 254th tank brigade was being withdrawn to the front reserve for replenishment. Send the brigade to the left bank of the Volga in the village of Rybachy (Novy) for additional staffing and materiel.

It became officially known to us that we had withdrawn from the fighting, that we would be crossing to the left bank of the Volga, that we would receive reinforcements, and that new battles with the enemy were coming.

By dawn, it became crowded near the field kitchen. Everyone was impatiently waiting for hot food, which they had not even seen in the last few days. We were late with breakfast, because with great difficulty we found water suitable for cooking. Along the way and in the area where the water was drawn from the wells by passing military units and refugees.

Not far from the kitchen, children of school age were sitting in groups in identical dark blue caps, wrapped up in oversized coats, blankets, scarves, from under which nimble little eyes peeped out. The night was cool, and the children seemed to be frozen. Some began to crawl out of their houses - and, shivering, ran

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into the bushes. Many were once wearing white shirts. Red ties around the neck. The guys are dirty, exhausted and very hungry. Two older girls, probably pioneer leaders, went up to the kitchen and asked for boiling water for the guys. They only had crackers left, which they were given in one military unit. The children had not eaten anything hot for many days. As they said, it was one of the evacuated pioneer camps from some area of the Black Sea coast that went east to the Volga from the advancing enemy. At first they were evacuated by train, but it was bombed near Rostov, where they got stuck for some time. Many children and teachers died there. When the enemy approached Rostov, they were sent in trucks. Then the cars were fired from planes in the interfluvium between the Don and the Volga, where several guys were buried. Cars and food supplies burned down. For many tens of kilometers they walked along the Kalmyk steppe along with crowds of refugees. Shoes were worn out, spare clothes and a change of linen burned down during the bombing. It was difficult without food and water. Among them were many children of other states who did not know the Russian language. They rested in a pioneer camp with our children. The elders of this group, the women, went off somewhere to fuss about the further fate of the children. The Red Army soldiers and commanders surrounded the children, began to distribute their poor savings to them: now crackers, now canned food, now packs of concentrates, now a bar of soap. Suddenly a voice was heard: "Let's feed the children with hot food! These are our children!" Others also supported. On behalf of all those present, the company officer on duty reported to the commander on the decision of the personnel. He warned that there would be no time to prepare another breakfast, to perform soon. Agreed. Then he gave the go-ahead. The Red Army soldiers began to move away from the boilers, some of them took only boiling water in a pot and crackers. Soldiers still approached the kitchen alone and noisily asked the cooks why they didn't feed the "serving" people, and when the cook Kharitonov answered that the "serving" people refused breakfast in favor of the children, and when

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the meaning of what was said reached, the rest of the "servants" silently DEPARTED FROM THE BOILERS.

The children did not believe that they would suddenly be fed with real soldier's porridge, which real soldiers had not eaten for a long time. To the call: "Run to the soldiers' boilers!" - no one moved from their place, although they did not take their eyes off the emanating steam and such an inviting smell of the boiler. Pioneer reaped guys lined up and led in single file to the boilers. They also had dishes: a saucepan, a bowl, a cup or a tin can. Not everyone had spoons, scooped up with breadcrumbs, gathered in groups for one pan and one spoon. When the guys were eating porridge, the Red Army soldiers and commanders began to gather around them, and one could see the brightened faces of adults - as if they were feeding their own children.

Perhaps, at that time, everyone remembered their child, brother or sister and imagined them in the place of these children. The fate and the sight of the suffering children painfully pierced the hearts of these adult, courageous people who had just survived death. Many had tears in their eyes. These were tears of despair, and tears of anger, and tears of an oath: to defend our land, our Motherland at any cost.

Over Stalingrad, the glow of conflagrations blazed, and the muffled explosions of air bombs were more and more clearly audible. We moved there, into this inferno, because we had to go to the crossing at the appointed time.

In the afternoon, our column went to the Kuporosnoye area, where there was a big halt. The headquarters and all units of the brigade went further north and settled somewhere on the southern outskirts of Stalingrad. We took with us so many vehicles to accommodate the remaining personnel and a limited amount of food, equipment, and fuel. All other serviceable and defective vehicles, flying cars, warehouses with the remnants of food and clothing items were left with us, the technical support company. Everything had to be shuffled and placed on the minimum number of machines. There was a dispute over the restriction

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for the loading of repair equipment, a lot was left. And so the night came. We settled into the cars and dozed where someone was sitting. Even before dawn, the command followed: "Start!", And the column moved into the darkness.

Thursday, September 3, 1942 THE SOUTHERN OUTSIDE OF STALINGRAD.

Early in the morning our column arrived at the southern outskirts of Stalingrad, where the remnants of the brigade were concentrated. They moved along the burning streets, among the ruins, through the smoke, burning. The city was on fire. We stopped in some area with one- and two-story houses with gardens and berry fields. There were many military units around. Nearby were anti-aircraft installations, women in military uniform flashed by them. The equipment was in the yards, on the street. There was work for our repairmen — they put our transport and other divisions of the brigade in order.

I was told that in the medical platoon, brigade doctor Rappoport was gathering all the medical workers for a meeting. I headed there. Along the way, in places there were sections of streets with surviving houses, orchards, with front gardens, flower beds, fenced fences. But the vast majority walked past the still smoking ruins. On some sections of the streets there were overturned trees, power poles, blocking the way. Single large craters from bomb explosions. Destroyed burning houses. There was a smell of burning, ashes. To the northeast of us, the city was shrouded in a solid hood of black smoke. In some places, especially from above, there are clouds of white smoke. This mass trembled periodically from resounding explosions, like a living being. Between houses and trees one could see the water surface of the Volga.

The medical platoon was housed in a solid, large wooden house with a flower garden by the porch and an orchard in the yard. There was also a children's playground: swings, carousels, toy houses, clay animals surrounded by dug trenches. Hanging in the house

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we are drawings of animals, rivers, boats, children, the sun. Apparently, they were drawing by children. There are toys in the cupboards. In all likelihood, a kindergarten was located here. Children and civilians were not visible nearby.

Everyone was in the collection, I came last - perhaps they were waiting for me. All those who were in Kosterevo at the time of formation gathered here. The brigvrach opened the meeting in the house, in one of the large rooms. At first, he expressed sincere satisfaction and joy that he sees all the medical workers alive and in perfect health. The paramedic of the 1st tank battalion was slightly wounded and hopes that he will soon join the ranks. He introduced us to the situation. Then he said that the unit commanders were ordered to present those who especially distinguished themselves for government awards. He believes that all medical workers are worthy of awards. Then he announced that he was starting a brief review of the work of the medical platoon and individual medical workers and would set tasks for the coming days. A more detailed analysis will be done beyond the Volga with a new replenishment. His performance was suddenly interrupted by several strong, biting explosions. Window glass and plaster fell down, the building shook. Another bombing.

He commanded: "Everyone in the trenches!" and ran into the yard. There was a rumble of flying planes, anti-aircraft guns were pounding. I stayed in the room where the meeting was held with Ivanov, the medical instructor of the medical platoon. Suddenly, another strong explosion shook the house: somehow, in an instant, it whipped hard, sprinkled us with fragments of glass remaining in the windows, covered us with plaster and threw us against the wall. We instinctively backed into a corner.

Everything was silent, then screams were heard in the yard. They jumped up, shook off the pieces of glass, clay, chalk, and ran out into the yard. They saw a torn trench and a dead brigdoctor on the spot. The arm, along with the shoulder blade, was twisted out of the body. There was a large, deep wound in the back of the chest with visible lung tissue. Nearby they found a small boot with a part of the lower

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pieces and shreds of uniforms in blood and sand. This is all that remains of Luda, the health instructor of the medical platoon. It had to happen like this - a direct hit by a relatively small bomb on that place in the trench, where brigvrach Rappoport and medical instructor Lyuda jumped up. The rest were covered with earth and received no injuries. We are all numb. It did not fit and did not want to believe that such a thing had suddenly happened, although they had seen and experienced a lot.

Medical instructor Ivanov rushed around the yard looking for Lyuda's remains. Bomb explosions continued in the city to the north of us, where the glow of a huge conflagration was blazing. The roar of aircraft did not stop, anti-aircraft guns were fired nearby. All this seemed to concern no one, we were so struck by the death of our colleagues that happened before our eyes. Ivanov found nothing. He put a boot with the rest of Lyuda's leg next to him. He sat down near the porch, put his head in his hands and froze in that position. Maya stood in the trench, her hands in fists pressed to her chest and stared at the mangled body of Rappoport lying nearby. And we all the rest froze in horror, grief of loss, mercilessness and cruelty of war. Doctor Hasan-Zade came out from somewhere with a raincoat, dressing gowns in his hands. He approached the body of the deceased and, without a word, called the others with a nod of his head. I approached, Modzelevsky, Shepshelev. They spread a raincoat nearby, laid Rappoport's body, the remnants of Luda's clothes and her leg, and covered them with dressing gowns. "Everyone go home," Gasan-Zade said quietly. They began to disperse. I was without a car. I decided to get to the headquarters of the brigade, and from there, like a parrot, to myself. Explosions of bombs and shells continued in the city.

As he was about to leave, he heard sobs. Maya leaned on the edge of the trench, her head resting on her hands, her frail body trembling with sobs. I haven't spoken to her yet. I wanted to come up now, calm, console. How - did not know yet. He himself was shocked. He did not dare to approach her. How will she react like the others? Some obsession. Didn't come up with anything - went to the doctor Panchen

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Ko and asked to calm Maya. She approached her, said something to her, and she began to shudder even more with sobs. I went up to them, jumped into the trench, lifted this fragile, trembling with nervous trembling creature in my arms and carried it up the steps from the trench. As much as I wanted to let her out of my hands, I had to put her on her feet. She apparently did not understand what was happening to her, where she was. Panchenko hugged her and led her into the house. I envied all those who had to be with her in the service. He took a deep breath and resolutely headed for the gate.

Ivanov was squatting by the porch and swaying with his head covered by his hands. I went to him, but Shepshelev stopped me, took me by the hand, took me away and said: "Don't touch him, let him cry. He had love with Luda.

The massive bombardment of the city continued, which was already becoming habitual and did not distract from what had happened. This absurd death of my colleagues never left my head. I had a confidential conversation with Rappoport back in Kosterevo, where the brigade was being formed. And after passing the 74th kilometer, he told me with regret that my commander took away the award documents he had issued for me from the brigade headquarters. He was a tall, handsome, well-built man in his thirties, trim, in a well-fitting uniform. In buttonholes - one sleeper. He served in the Belarusian military district, where he found the war. Nurse Luda was also in the team from the day of formation - a little over a month.

There was no passing car at the headquarters, and I went on foot to my unit. There were continuous air battles over the city. More and more centers of large fires were encountered along the way, house after house was burning. They were not extinguished. There was no water. The centralized water supply and sewerage were broken. There were isolated civilians carrying buckets of water from the Volga.

That evening, Political Commissar Titov read to us Order No. 4 to the troops of the Stalingrad and South-Eastern fronts.

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By this order, the commander and member of the Military Council expressed the cry of the soul of the people to their soldiers to defend Stalingrad.

We already understood that the situation of our troops as a whole was extremely difficult. One appeal is not enough. New parts and weapons were needed. They won't follow us. And the thought did not leave why we were so crowded and beaten. Where does the enemy have so much strength? Will we hold on?

Friday, September 4, 1942 WAITING FOR THE CROSSING.

Everyone lived in anticipation of the crossing to the left bank of the Volga. Talk and action went around it. We determined the transport and property that we take with us. Left the essentials. The place of crossing assigned to us in the region of the southern outskirts of Stalingrad was canceled. The moorings and the approach to them were destroyed by enemy aircraft, and this crossing became unsuitable for performing its functions. They switched to the Kuporosnoye district, where all the units of the brigade departed, except for us. Our representative was constantly on duty there, waiting in line.

As in our area on the southern outskirts of Stalingrad, so in the Kuporosnoye area, the approaches to the crossings and the area around at a great distance were packed with cars with people, a large number of refugees. All this flow tried to cross the Volga. The approaches to the crossings were cordoned off by troops, and no one was allowed in without special passes.

Enemy aircraft, artillery shells of the enemy made adjustments, disabled crossings. The schedules of their work were violated, the terms of evacuation were delayed. The remnants of the troops, the streams of the wounded and the civilian population all approached and accumulated in living masses in a large area along the Volga. The arriving fresh troops poured into this mass. All this was bombed from the air and subjected to artillery and mortar fire.

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shelling by German troops approaching the Volga. We already knew that in the northern region of Stalingrad the fascists reached the Volga more than a week ago, although this was not officially said or written, and the Soviet Information Bureau has not yet reported anything.

There were different rumors. The command did not report anything. Newspapers were not read, they were not. It was rumored that the Germans occupied most of the city and many of our divisions were defending in the encirclement.

The enemy tried to push troops into the Volga in our area as well. We felt it in his offensive actions. How will we get out of here and will we have time?

Tanks and personnel were waiting for us across the Volga. But first of all, it is necessary to evacuate the wounded. These are future warriors, experienced and fired upon. Many of them needed qualified and specialized medical care and died due to lack of it.

The command of the brigade dangled through the authorities with some papers, but nothing came out so far. The personnel were already losing faith in the possibility of crossing. We lay in the trenches and under cars.

Our sector was periodically subjected to artillery shelling. Some, at their own discretion and initiative, began to dig cells near the machines, small trenches. The command of the company did not give orders, they themselves were confused. From hour to hour they were waiting for the command to go to the crossing. The enemy was not visible, but could at any moment be nearby. It overwhelmed, instilled uncertainty, fear. It is better to see the enemy in front of you, as it was at the junction, in the Zetas and other places. Then a great self-confidence is created, you see and know how to defend yourself.

Next lay Manko. Kostya Naumov came up and sat down next to us.

- Here we lay down the bones. We can't fucking get out. They cannot reach a solution for a new crossing. They sneeze at us. Nobody needs us, cast-offs, iron rubbish.

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Will you swim across the Volga? Kostya turned to me.

"I can't swim at all," I admitted, "I didn't have anywhere at home and somehow I didn't learn."

"Then your business is rubbish. I hope to swim across the Volga if they don't poke me.

- I'm like everyone else. I hope that the barge or the ferry will hold me.

- Hope, hope. All barges are sinking. Maybe they'll pick up an unsinkable one for you. Haven't you seen the barges sink?

- Saw. But more are coming. Just a barge with troops arrived. Yes, and they reach the left bank, especially at night. Sometimes they drown. What do you propose?

- You have to know how to swim.

I can't, I haven't learned. Are you a marine specialist? What do you offer?

- Nothing. These will sink.

- What are you croaking about! Manko grabbed.

"He's joking like that, such a bastard. How to understand it? I noticed.

I joked. You have to throw everything. All this junk. Do the rafts or swim, holding on to the cameras from cars, rafts, logs. On the other side we will get everything new. Who will think of us? Eat more important than a bird.

— In gives! You are carrying on a rotten policy, Naumov," Sargsyan stepped up to intervene, "and we are still needed. Very much. The front command needs combat full-blooded units. Our stub is of no use here, but on the other side - this is a tank brigade, you understand ?! The main backbone has been preserved, and if cars with people are given to it, there will again be a tank brigade! And what! Already with combat experience that does not lie underfoot. We will not be forgotten. The turn will come - they will ferry us.

At this time, a series of explosions of artillery shells followed nearby. Our area was being shelled. We squeezed into the ground, others fled into the cells, trenches, funnels.

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- Here is a bitch, already under the very nose, everything is rushing and rushing. How to stop him? And broke the crossings. How to cross the Volga? On a flying carpet? Wait, they will serve you. He said that he needed to swim across. Remove the wheels from the cars and on the tires forward, - Naumov bent his line.

"New crossings will be built," Sargsyan replied, "many of our troops are coming. They will not give the city to the Germans. And they will send us here.

— Prepare boats: inflate logs, boards, tires.

No one will help us guys. Either it will be crushed here, or the fish will be sent to feed, there is little chance of salvation. You see, this is our fate.

- They sang for peace, that's enough! Went to look for logs. Let's cut the posts and stuff the staples so that we can catch on. If the barge sinks, then at least there will be something to catch on and we'll get out somehow



Somehow, - the foreman of the "Kroshka" autoplatoon intervened, - let's go to work!

He himself got up, and a group of Red Army men followed him.

"Why are you so sure that we will safely cross over to the left bank?" I asked Sargsyan.

Whether I'm sure or not, it doesn't matter. People dropped their noses. We need to cheer them up. Faith must not be lost, although things are bad. What are you upset about?

- I can't swim. I would not like to go with an ax to the BOTTOM.

"Keep some churka on the barge. Look and it will work.

We saw that almost every departing barge was hunted by "Junkers" or "Messerschmitts" - bombed, machine-gunned, trying to set fire or sink. Not every barge made it to the left bank. Before our arrival, the pier was bombed. On the shore and near the water, fires were still raging in patches, warehouses and buildings were burning. They are no longer extinguished. The whole area around was shrouded in smoke. There were often air battles above us, desperately

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anti-aircraft guns fired, and enemy planes broke through and bombed everything around.

Under these conditions, we were waiting for our turn to cross the left bank of the Volga.

Saturday, September 5, 1942 THE CROSSINGS ARE BURNING.

So, in anticipation of the crossing, this night also passed. In the morning we learned that most of the brigade sank at night and the barge safely moved away from the shore. The queue is behind us. This is our technical support company, a part of ordinary and special vehicles with people from other units of the brigade and warehouses on wheels. Lieutenant Colonel Ivanov remained in charge of the group and another commander from the brigade headquarters was with him.

The situation became more difficult. The enemy was coming closer and closer to the Volga, occupying the dominant heights on the southwestern approaches to Stalingrad. More and more precisely, he conducted aimed artillery and mortar fire at the crossings, the river, and the concentrations of our troops near the coast. Began to bomb our area more often. The fire of our anti-aircraft batteries did not weaken, but the enemy's dominance in the air noticeably prevailed.

In the afternoon, in the southern regions of Stalingrad, the crossing of the Volga practically stopped due to continuous shelling and bombing. With the onset of darkness, the cannonade somewhat subsided, and the crossings began to work more actively, but even here the enemy did not doze off. Periodically hung "lanterns" on parachutes over the Volga, and artillery and mortar shelling of barges, ferries, moorings and the coast began again. The anti-aircraft guns responded belatedly. While the "lanterns" descended to the surface of the water, it was light all around and everything was visible at a glance.

There is an order, and we have already been determined to cross somewhere. Even if the queue for loading comes up, then what awaits us on the water, will the Volga show indulgence towards us, will it be allowed to do this? It seemed that everything we had experienced up to this point could not be compared with what was to be experienced here. In our area to Kuporosny almost

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all the barges and ferries with troops and cargo were bombed and fired upon by the enemy before our very eyes.

Already with the onset of darkness, engineer-lieutenant colonel Ivanov arrived at our location and ordered to pull the vehicles of our detachment into the marching column. Everything was done quickly and

soon we moved into impenetrable darkness. Must be crossing. Good time!

Sunday, September 6, 1942. ARE ALL REMEDIES GOOD?

Engineer Lieutenant Colonel Ivanov obtained permission for our detachment to cross somewhere in the Beketovka area. All night we advanced there with long stops among other military units and groups of the civilian population. They tried to bypass the main main road clogged with troops, ran into ravines and gullies, and returned. We went further and further into the darkness from the huge glow left behind us. With distance, it was even more shrouded in smoke and did not decrease in size.

Dawn caught us on a terrain of small shrubs, located in groves among the sands without grass. It can be seen that it was a floodplain of the spring flood of the Volga or some kind of dry backwater. Here they stopped. The company commander and Lieutenant Colonel Ivanov immediately left for the place of the upcoming crossing. We had breakfast. The kitchens went to refuel with water in Beketovka. The situation here was very different from the previous one on the southern outskirts of Stalingrad. Unusually quiet. Shells and mines are not exploding, planes are flying by, paying no attention to us.

The personnel slept in the cabs of the cars, in the bodies on top of the property. Nothing depended on us. The time will come - cars will go and take us. This is what people lived. Faster to cross.

At noon I was summoned to the company commander. There were political officer Titov, deputy commander of the company commander Kalmykov and engineer-lieutenant colonel Ivanov.

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"Doctor, now you will go with me as you are, with a sanitary bag, of course," said Ivanov.

- Eat!

I always had a sanitary bag with me, and a gas mask, and, of course, a TT pistol. He also took a cloak, a cape not from rain - from wind and dust. Ivanov drove around in an open GAZ-51 flatbed car.

Soon we were stopped by the Red Army men, who stood in a cordon, and we were not allowed to go further by car, despite the documents presented by Ivanov. They offered to go on foot to the authorities. Moved off the main road to the side. We left the car with a driver and set off on foot to the commandant of the crossing.

"Look closely and wind on your mustache, what's what," Ivanov told me.

- What to look for? I didn't understand.

- Look and remember. Why I took you, I'll tell you later.

We continued to push forward. Soon they stopped at another cordon. After looking at the documents, they missed it. We walked past the columns of trucks with cargo and military people, past the cars with the wounded. We went to the crossing along a single road, which ran in a narrow throat along a high embankment to the very shore, where, apparently, a pier was recently equipped. Boards, logs were still fresh. There was a ferry at the pier, from which an artillery unit was being unloaded. A group of tents has been set up along the shore, there are covered cars, flying boats, trenches have been dug leading to dugouts, and there are a lot of guards. We were shown the tent of the duty officer at the crossing, from which a wide trench led to the dugout.

There were many commanders of different ranks crowding around. They got in line. After some time, Ivanov made his way to the duty officer, a lieutenant colonel, who was registering. I pushed after him. That

looked through the papers, registered and said to visit in three days. Then he will indicate the time and after which part we will go to the pen

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law. We went out. Ivanov led me to the pier. On the same ferry, some part was already being loaded. Cars were passed through the third cordon. We went to them. There, each car was stopped at the barrier, the documents were checked, the numbers of the cars were checked against the list, and one by one they were let onto the narrow high embankment leading to the pier. There were rocket launchers interspersed with trucks.

"Why are they being sent, don't the front need them?" I asked Ivanov.

"Perhaps for repairs or for formation, as we do. It's none of our business. Think about how we can get across.

What could I think? We went to the ferry and cars with the wounded. First of all, they were let through at all cordon points in groups for each loading, interspersed with other units.

On the embankment near the barrier, a car with a load, covered with a tarpaulin, was stopped, apparently breaking through out of turn. Red Army soldiers were sitting on top, commander. They found out something, they swore. This car delayed the entire convoy. A general came up with a pistol in his hand, threatened the senior officer of this car, and ordered the people to get down. He ordered something, and the Red Army guards, more than a dozen people, moved the car to the edge of the embankment on their hands and overturned it with a load down. The rest moved back to the ferry crossing. This car must have broken through from another part or was not listed in the documents for the crossing. I was shocked by this cruel scene.

"Let's go," and Lieutenant Colonel Ivanov led me away from the crossing. On the way he asked:

- What conclusion did you draw?

"Very strict," I replied, "we won't get to the crossing soon, and in three days the German may come here if we don't succeed in crossing before."

"I think so too," he said. And after a few silences, he added: - We will cross today at night and only today.

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- How? - I did not get anything.

— Tonight, or we won't get to the crossing at all. - He thought about something and asked: - Do you have a lot of bandages?

- A whole set - a gauze bag and another part of the set.

- I saw the wounded being let through without a queue. It will be necessary to recruit the wounded, but our people also need to be transported," he walked silently for some time, stopped and point-blank, holding my shoulders with his hands, said: "You will bandage all of ours, in any case, the majority, with the exception of car drivers, elders and some others. I'll get the red ink and smear the bandages. Comes down at night. We will pick up some of the real wounded, load them up to ours, and tonight we will go out to the crossing. There is no other way out. Do you understand what kind of operation we have?

"Understood how not to understand.

- Don't ask questions yet. Look closely at the area, the situation and remember.

"I have to look closely and memorize," I answered mechanically and still could not imagine what was required of me. Rather, he presented everything well, but could not understand how it was possible to

make up your mind. In complete confusion, he followed the lieutenant colonel, both were silent. |

We got to the parking lot of our car. At that moment, bombs began to explode over the crossing. The Yuyunkers were coming out of the peak. Our anti-aircraft guns began to fire. There were automatic bursts.

- Today. Tonight or never, Ivanov told himself.

We immediately went to the location of our group. We decided to recruit the wounded from some medical facility and place them on our vehicles. And put bandages and tires on part of our personnel - to imitate the wounded. I asked the commissar if he could find red ink. He replied that there is one bottle.

- Give it to the doctor.

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They assigned me two people to help me, and at nightfall they ordered me to start bandaging. I fenced off a corner between the cars with a tarpaulin, and by the end of the day each platoon commander, squad leader, in turn, brought Red Army men to me, and I began to bandage them, put tires on them, under manual means. He laid out all his knowledge on desmurgy — the rules for applying bandages. There was laughter all around, joking with each other.

The company commander and the commissar repeatedly approached and demanded seriousness, warned them to moan at the crossing, imitate real wounded. They allocated more than a dozen cars and letuchek, in which it was planned to place the real wounded. Ivanov put me in his flatbed car, and this column set off for the real wounded. Didn't have to search long. During the day we saw the collection points for the wounded. We drove up to one of them, found the chief, and Ivanov told him that our unit was going to the crossing and ordered us to take the wounded with us. The boss was happy with us. The wounded were loaded onto cars and into flying boxes, I was given evacuation cards for them - cards of the advanced area, for transfer to a medical institution where they would be handed over. And we returned to our location. Some of our "wounded" were loaded onto them. The rest were loaded onto the remaining cars. This happened already late in the evening. We rebuilt the column and moved in the direction of the crossing. We were let through the first and second points of the cordon. The wounded were the pass. There was impenetrable darkness. They checked the cars with flashlights. The berth area is the shore, the area around was periodically subjected to indiscriminate artillery and mortar fire. At the third point of the cordon, our cars were kept for a long time. They summoned Lieutenant Colonel Ivanov to the commandant of the crossing, scolded him severely, threatened to tell the tribunal that they climbed into the crossing out of turn. It was impossible to return the column back along the narrow embankment and they did not dare to throw the cars with the wounded off the road, as they had done with one car the day before.

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Each car was carefully checked, illuminated with flashlights, climbed into the back of the car, looked into the tents. The sight of the wounded, the bloody bandages, the protruding tires had taken their toll. We were allowed to cross, thanks, of course, to the wounded.

A barge was brought in for loading. Cars entered one by one. During loading, the crossing again came under artillery and mortar fire. The shells landed exactly. It must be that the enemy was well oriented, he shot this place in the afternoon. There were wounded and dead among the guards, ours and other units.

We had one driver wounded by shrapnel. He was replaced at the wheel by Naumov. One of our "wounded" was killed. We took both with us. They loaded the barge with equipment and people from some other part. Everyone was in a hurry, and the loading was delayed. From bomb explosions, the resulting waves shook the barge, and it was simply impossible for cars to enter it. We had to wait a while for the waves to subside. And long after midnight, the barge was finally towed by a small-looking steamboat and dragged us along in a very long tow. Went, as it seemed to us, very

slowly and for a long time. Dawn has come. We approached the landing stage and gave up the ends. We were hooked with hooks, dragged and strengthened. All the time they looked at the sky, fearing the vultures. The level of the barge, the landing stage and the shore did not coincide and very much, which made it difficult to unload. But many strong hands unanimously pushed the cars out of the barge onto the landing stage, and then lowered them down to the ground, even unstarted cars with a load. So we tried to get out of this unreliable shell to the shore as quickly as possible. It turned out that we landed on Sarpinsky Island, from which we still had to cross to the left bank of the Volga.

Refugees and the civilian population of the city, who had accumulated near the Volga in the hope of crossing to the left bank, were given incredibly difficult trials. They were mostly old people, women, and children. They weren't addressed

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no attention, they were left to their own devices. They were not allowed to the Volga, they were located under the open sky in the steppe under the scorching sun during the day and rather cool nights. They were subjected to bombing, mortar and shelling, hunger and thirst, and were left without medical care. They hid from the bombings in the basements of the houses where they lived. Many died, suffered from hunger and thirst. There was no planned provision of the population with food and water. The Red Army soldiers and commanders, if possible, shared with the civilian population, but they themselves were in great difficulty.

Monday, September 7, 1942 SARPINSKY ISLAND.

Everyone took a deep breath as they felt the ground under their feet. Faces brightened. Jokes were heard. We finally got out of the hell in which we had been roasting for a whole month. How little time - a month. And how long did this whole nightmare last.

How much we have experienced - and only a month. And the war has been going on for two years now. How to imagine what they experienced, and what trials still lie ahead?

The unloading was not yet completed, and the fresh part was already being loaded. The real wounded were reloaded more compactly into fewer vehicles, and I was ordered to take them and hand them over to a medical facility. Many felt uncomfortable with the whole performance. They felt that they had done something very blasphemous, as if they had robbed their loved ones.

Following the command of the brigade, we also had to urgently cross over. I had to take this step. Do all means justify the end?

Soon we reached the evacuation receptacle deployed on the island, where we surrendered the wounded without much trouble.

The island was mostly flat, without natural shelters, the ground was sandy. We walked past small groves,

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fungus, some of them were still covered with an awning. Here, apparently, there was a resting place for the Stalingraders.

The cars were parked in the ravines. An order was received to dig trenches for personnel, which they did. The command left to fuss about crossing from the island to the left bank.

And it was far from safe here. Everyone understood this and tried to dig trenches as quickly as possible. By evening, the authorities returned. We were not informed of anything, and we understood that with the crossing so far nothing happened.

Tuesday, September 8, 1942 STALINGRAD IN FIRE.

Another night passed, terrible, not like all the others. Were severely frozen. It was cold in the overcoat. I did not sleep that night, like most of my comrades. And not because of the cold. We climbed the mounds, and we were riveted to the opposite bank of the Volga. A huge boiling glow over Stalingrad snatched up and illuminated a large area around, including the part of the island where we were.

The city was burning on the opposite bank, as far as one could see in both directions. The enemy finished off the defeated city. Is it trusted? All fresh and fresh units were sent there to defend it. And Stalingrad fought with every house, every street.

It was bombarded throughout the night, although the Germans usually stopped fighting at night. Many soldiers did not reach the right bank of the Volga and, without engaging in battle, drowned.

We spent several days in the burning and defending Stalingrad, but did not feel the scope of its misfortune and destruction. It appeared completely different now with its scale and grandeur, tormented and wounded, but not broken. The battle was still ahead of him. We felt and firmly believed that here it would be decided who wins. If not a city, then its ashes, the land on which

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stood, will protect. There is no longer any retreat and nowhere to go. And all his torments and losses will be in the name of saving the whole country, the outcome of the war.

The faces of my comrades were stern. They looked with horror and pain at what was happening opposite and were silent, frozen like stones.

Lieutenant Colonel Ivanov, company commander Mikhailovsky and representatives of the brigade headquarters had breakfast before everyone else and left to fuss about crossing from the island.

In the evening they returned. There was nothing new for us. The queue has not yet come, although the ferry worked around the clock.

Wednesday, September 9, 1942 FINALLY, THE LEFT BANK OF THE VOLGA!

Another night and day passed. Somehow it immediately got colder. The overcoat did not warm. We are chilly. They did not dare to kindle bonfires - they observed blackout. Even the kitchen was driven away from our location into the ravine so that it would not spark and smoke nearby. And no one slept that night. The island was bombed, especially the crossings, the western and central parts of it were shelled by artillery. Everyone was tense to the limit. They got out of the hell, but they were not safe here either. Death could come by accident. I didn't want it to happen from a bomb or shell already far from the front line, I didn't want it to happen in a dream. A Red Army soldier Ozheshko approached me with an inflated camera from the wheel of a car.

"Take it, doctor, it will come in handy. I heard you can't swim. We will be crossing — keep near you just in case.

He touched me with this concern to tears. Thanked him. For some reason, I didn't think to stock up on a camera earlier. Will she help when there are fragments and bullets around, but his care and comrades were pleasant.

Long after noon, a representative from the headquarters of the brigade arrived and ordered to urgently pull out

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car column to follow to the crossing. He ordered to put out the fire in the furnaces and completely remove the coal, otherwise they would not be allowed to cross. You can't linger, because you have to come

ferry and after unloading it, we will immediately load.

Enemy aircraft bombed the island. Our group was a very visible target for the enemy. Finally, under the roar of planes, bomb explosions and Ivanov's swearing, they moved forward, moving with frequent stops among other units and vehicles with the wounded, who also went to one of the crossings. We passed the cordon and went to the branch of the Volga to the north of the crossing. A steamboat was leaving in the distance, on a trailer which had a barge with troops and wounded. Horses and carts were also visible. At the pier, the approaching ferry was moored, on which we had to load. Artillery self-propelled anti-tank mounts with 76-mm guns were unloaded. On the barge leaving in front of us, a huge column of water suddenly rose, from which the black silhouette of the Junkers shot up into the sky. Then came the sound of a dull explosion and the rumble of a flying plane. All this happened so unexpectedly that they did not have time to figure out what had happened right away. The barge began to list on its side, and cars, people, wagons, horses - everything that was on it fell into the water. The whole horror of what was happening began to emerge in the mind.

The small tug-boat did not stop, but continued to move forward just as slowly, the barge went under water, and it was already dragging under water what was left of the barge. All this happened in a matter of minutes. At the site of the explosion, various objects, barrels, were floating, people, horses were swarming, and high circular waves were leaving from there.

Rescue boats were coming from the pier and from the opposite shore. Anti-aircraft guns fired desperately around the crossing and from the opposite side, but neither our planes nor the enemy planes were visible in the sky. We froze in horror, staring at the rescue boats that were coming to the crash site. Too instant and inevitable

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everything happened. The Volga swallowed up a barge with people, horses and equipment before our eyes. There was a barge, and it is not. Who decides the fate of people?

What happened with a very strong pain was reflected in each of us. For some reason, I took out a chamber inflated with air, pressed it to me and froze, sitting on top of the property in the body. Must be looked very funny.

Get off the car and stand next to me. With one hand he held on to the side, in the other he held the camera. Kostya came up and said to me:

- What did you grab? Now you do not need it, and there is little chance on the ferry - a fragment will break through. Swim, only swim can get out. The main thing is not to get lost.

All right, but how is it?

The gunners were unloading very hastily, and we immediately went to load. We missed the second cordon, and we went to the pier. Loaded quickly. It was no longer a barge, but a ferry, flatter and wider, sitting low in the water. A subdivision of another unit plunged with us. A steamboat took us in tow and slowly dragged us against the current to the opposite bank. At dusk we approached the pier. They picked up the ends, pulled them up and strengthened them with a ferry. Unloaded hastily already in the dark.

The cars moved away from the pier, lined up in a marching column and slowly left again along the dusty steppe road into the night of the Trans-Volga region. They stopped after an hour and a half. The cars were dispersed. Guards were posted.

All the stress of the days gone by. All free from the attire fell asleep dead. We felt that all the dangers were behind us. I climbed into the back of the onboard vehicle to the commander of the autopatoon, Manko. He was lying on top of some kind of cargo, covered with a cape. He grumbled something, but did not wake up. In my overcoat and boots, I squeezed through to him under the cape and fell into the abyss.

Woke up screaming. Manko shook me by the shoulders and pushed me away. I clung to him tightly, not knowing where I was. The darkness of the night was gone. Looking back, I asked him:

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Where is the water, where are they?

- Wake up! You are in a car. Shouted something, choked me. Dreamed what?

I looked around, came to my senses. Reality loomed vaguely. I began to understand where I am now and what I have seen recently.

... The bomb hit the ferry, exploded, and people, cars, guns - everything fell into the water. And I'm in the water. In my hands I have an air-filled camera from a motorcycle. I hold on to the camera with one hand and row with the other. I notice that the camera is getting smaller and smaller. Air bubbles out through the hole punched by the fragment. I pinch the hole with my finger, and the camera gets smaller and smaller, my hands go numb, and I can barely hold on to it and feel that it is completely without air and I don't need it like this anymore. I let her out of my hands - she goes to the bottom ...

As I later understood from Manko's story, he woke up from the fact that I grabbed him with my hands and screamed. Woke him up and scared him. For some time he lay still, pondering what had happened. Gradually I came to my senses until I felt that I was cold. He got off the car and began to warm up by brisk walking, jogging. The sun rose. A new day began. The cooks were already busy near the kitchen. Everyone else was still sleeping. It needs to be like this...

Breakfast stretched out, people were sleeping, they didn't want to get up, and they could finally afford to rest. Apart from our company, there was no one around. There was an unusual silence. Small shrubs and boundless Trans-Volga steppe...

The commander arrived. He gave the command to prepare for the march, and he himself went to the kitchen to have breakfast. The engines started to work, the cars began to advance into the convoy. Soon we went to the place of our new deployment in the village of Rybachy (Novy), where we were to have a short rest and receive replenishment.

Part four

CAPTURE OF THE BROADHEAD (September 10 - October 5, 1942)

Thursday, September 10, 1942 BROKE OUT OF HELL.

Everything is behind. Was it a dream or a book read? .. Neither one nor the other. All this was in reality, I went through all this ...

After breakfast, I lay on the grass and looked at the sky: clear, dark blue, deep, boundless.

How many human lives were cut short by the war, the end of which is not yet in sight? How many people have not fulfilled their destiny on Earth, and how many more will die prematurely because of the epidemic of war invented by people for their own death?

On a global scale, it is difficult to imagine what awaits mankind after what they have seen, even in such a limited area of military operations as the battle in the Stalingrad direction.

Millions of people must have died already. In confirmation of what has been said, the losses of the personnel of our brigade during the first month of hostilities alone, which amounted to more than half of the staff, speak.

My thoughts and detachment were interrupted by the Red Army men, who approached me with broken bandages and abrasions. And I returned to earth. Yes, we must bandage all those in need. You need to go to the medical platoon and get additional dressings, medicines, see colleagues, find out



news. People need to be washed. Find out if there is a bathhouse in the village. We settled down near a river. The bulk of the personnel took care of themselves. They put themselves in order. Many washed the top uniforms

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'and dried on the grass under the sun. A hairdresser was found and preening those who wanted it right there, near the cars. The daredevils swam - the water was rather cool. People simply enjoyed such an unusual silence, the absence of shooting, explosions, the roar of aircraft, the opportunity to relax. There was a great desire to wash. Wash yourself with hot water and soap in a real bath. A motorcyclist came from the brigade headquarters and dumped a canvas bag with newspapers and letters. Newspapers periodically came to us, though not always fresh, but letters were rarely received. Most of the personnel received this time and more than one letter. There were also letters for fallen comrades.

By evening, the company was relocated to a new area, closer to the location of the brigade, in the village of Rybachy. We settled down on the outskirts near the river.

Friday, September 11, 1942 DOCTOR PANCHENKO'S REVELATIONS. BATH AND SOMETHING ELSE.

Cool at night and in the morning. Our house is the body of the car, the roof is the blue sky. Everyday three-time attachment to the field kitchen. And specific work, based on the situation.

The village of Rybachy is full of troops, and somewhere around here are the rest of the brigade. We have at our disposal an old, neglected forge, sheds, several sheds, fences where cattle used to live. Repair shops were set up under sheds.

I learned from the head of the transport and clothing service that the brigade was washing today in the village bathhouse and our time was after dinner. I hurried to the medical platoon for dressings. I did not find the head of the pharmacy. I wanted to see Maya, but she was not in the medical platoon either. I borrowed a dozen bandages for a bath from the rank of instructor Ivanov and got ready to go to my room. Met Lozhkina and Panchenko. Hello.

"We already know that you have crossed safely, and we are glad to see you," said Lozhkina.

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- Thank you. And I'm glad to see you in good health. Are all of our doctors alive? I asked.

"After the deaths of Brigadier Rappoport and Lyuda, the military paramedic of the 2nd tank battalion was also wounded. Light shrapnel wound to the muscles of the shoulder. The rest are all still alive. There is no new brig. Gasanchik dangles and gets angry. He gets it. Very nervous, irascible.

- How long will we be here? I asked.

- As soon as the tanks arrive, they will immediately throw them across the Volga again. Maybe from day to day.

"I wanted to get dressing material and medicines, but Shepshelev was not there.

- Coming soon. And Maya will be here soon," Lozhkina added slyly.

"I haven't looked for her yet. Where is she?

— In the control company. The company commander fell ill, Gomelsky invited her, and perhaps she went to Maksimov's headquarters. Find her or you'll miss it. They'll steal it.

I didn't find an answer. While he was thinking, she waved her hand and turned to Panchenko:

- Will you come to me?

- Thank you. I need to myself. My people must wash. See you soon," and Panchenko, who had been silent until now, turned to me: "Show me off." Shepshelev just left for headquarters. This is for a long time. You will receive medicines tomorrow, I can give you a dressing for the bath.

- Let's go. I see her off, and after a short silence he asked: "Why so sad? What happened?"

- Why rejoice? Blood and death all around. And it is very difficult for us women, doubly difficult in your environment.

- What do you! So much attention and love. There are so few of you.

- Sick of this adoration. It is until the moment when it achieves its goal, and then it may not say "hello".

- You are not in danger. If I'm not mistaken, the knight guarding you will not give offense.

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- Protects and offends.

- I didn't think so.

- In these conditions, it is very difficult for us, women, to be alone. Whatever we are, there is no end to your brother. So, it is reasonable to be with one and hide behind it from all the others.

- Did you do that?

— I did just that. I don't hide. Yes, and you can not hide. Everyone should know about this so that they do not knit. But the shield, I confess, I chose the wrong one. Your Lenechka is a big child and impudent, offends me. There is little intelligence and does not shine with intelligence. He cannot, or rather, is not able, due to his upbringing, to appreciate my disposition towards him. I don't want to go elsewhere. I'll see how it goes.

- It's a pity you're like that. But if life gives even a small piece of joy in this environment, one must be very grateful. And even more so, location, affection, and maybe love, then this is super happiness, and it is impossible not to appreciate.

- What is love? Hopefully, but it's empty. Life is worth nothing in this environment. How many have been killed! You know. And we could lose it. And I, like every woman, want love, devotion. It is especially important in these conditions. And then it's not scary to die, and maybe it's very scary, because it's a pity to lose what is good. Why did I mess with you. Does my frankness surprise you?

I am touched by the trust.

- It's just that I, a bad, unfortunate woman, needed to talk, pour out my soul. Lenya thinks and speaks very well of you. This is where I got frank.

- You said - the unfortunate woman. Maybe it's not like that at all. Lenya is not cheating on you. Yes, he is young and has no experience.

- With whom should he cheat on me? With a tank or a tree? Yes, young, and that's my problem. Well, him! How are you doing? There were rumors that the commander crossed you off the list, in which

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which he originally included for a government award after his departure. What did they do, what didn't they please?

- Yes, it's rubbish. He forbade frying potatoes with meat for him and some saints from a soldier's ration.

- Why did you need it?

- Don't know. It happened.

- What a fool.

Who, commander?

- No, sorry, you.

- I agree, I know what it is.

- My commander introduced me to the Order of the Red Star, and Leonid to the medal "For Military Merit". And the main thing is that we remained alive while we are alive.

After a short pause, she continued:

- You know, I envy Zoya Lozhkina. She really has.

- In what sense?

- In direct. Sadovsky treats her like a wife. Everyone knows about it, and you can't blame her. She is happy. She was lucky.

- What did you agree with the brigade commander?

— That they have a real friendship, and maybe more. He will not offend her, and she is sure of it," and quickly switched to another topic: "You are not indifferent to Maya. This is also known in medical platoon, but you have nothing to hope for.

- So they think in the medical platoon?

— I think so. She is good, maybe very good. Beautiful, smart. Saint. K. Maksimov is selected for her, and he is a figure. He has experience, and she can not resist. He has a family, she understands that this is for a while. Nobody can count on the future.

Then she added:

- Don't back down. Who knows what awaits us.

Thanks for the advice and for being honest. I don't even understand what I caused such an arrangement,  
Very

touched. 178

— There is such a need in a person, internal, to speak out, to share his burden, especially heavy, and somehow it becomes easier. And it became easier for me. Here is our location. Come in. We will be very happy.

- I'll come, thank you, hello Lena. And now I'm running. See you!

And I went to the company.

Everyone already knew that an order had arrived from the headquarters of the brigade indicating the time for washing people in the village bathhouse with disinfection of uniforms. Time for our company in the afternoon. This news made everyone very happy.

Sergeant Major Nikolaev announced that he would give everyone new underwear and uniforms. More than one third of the personnel of the company remained forever on the right bank of the Volga, and stocks of uniforms and linen, apparently, were preserved. Linen was changed during the retreat between battles, without washing the personnel. They bathed in the rivers they met along the way, washed and swam in the Volga on Sarpinsky Island. But in the bath, as such, it was not necessary to wash in the last month and a half. There was a pleasant, some kind of domestic event, in anticipation of which the thoughts and actions of people were directed.

Together with everyone, I was getting ready for the bath: I replenished the sanitary bag with dressings, ointments, tincture of iodine - dressings were coming after the bath. Songs were sung along the way from the bathhouse. They sang fervently, with pleasure. And in the ranks there were mostly elderly people of civilian professions, according to their warehouse, they were completely unsuited to the drill step and the drill song, and even more so to the war. The war pulled up these people, who had just survived all its horrors, hardened them and made them real fighters.

Saturday, September 12, 1942 WAKE.

Replenishment arrived: drivers, locksmiths. Mostly thirty years. The drivers are younger, some after injuries. From the words of the arrivals, they learned about a very difficult

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position of our troops in Stalingrad. Ours still hold the already disparate sections of the city. The enemy in many areas came to the Volga.

After lunch I went to the medical platoon. I met Gomelsky near the brigade headquarters. He got a lot in the control company. All the time near the headquarters. Served in a hot time the management of the brigade, sappers, signalmen, scouts. On the way, he said that in a combat situation he was mainly at the command post of the brigade. He told about the death of the chief of staff of the brigade, Captain Kalinin, who was mortally wounded and died in his arms, and other comrades.

In the medical platoon at the head of the pharmacy, Shepshelev, I found a military paramedic of a motorized rifle machine-gun battalion, Lenya Modzelevsky.

"It wouldn't hurt to celebrate our meeting and remember who is not with us," Lenya remarked, "what do you think, the head of the pharmacy?"

"I am for it," Shepshelev replied.

- Grab a drink, and let's go to my place, I'll find a snack.

- Walking far to you, and this is long music. Let the host put out a snack, not get poorer and be faster," suggested Gomelsky, "we don't have much time.

- Whom to prescribe alcohol for? - Shepshelev specifically turned to the case.

"Yes, on any of us, you can on me," Modzelevsky replied.

Shepshelev pulled out a sheet of paper from the clipboard, wrote down a demand for medicines, put down rectified alcohol without indicating the quantity, and gave Modzelevsky to sign for receipt. Then he took us to the dining tent, left us for a few minutes and returned with medical instructor Ivanov. He opened the box, took out bread, stew, spoons and began to arrange on the table. Shepshelev opened the flask.

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"We need to call Dr. Gasan-Zade," said Gomelsky, "and the women doctors Zoya and Maya.

Soon Dr. Hasan-Zade opened the flap of the tent, came in and, surprised, looked at us:

- Whoa, who's here! Where is the big boss? Why did you deceive me, Gomelsky, where are you?

Doctors Maya and Zoya came in.

Gomelsky followed into the tent, smiling broadly, and, assuming a serious expression on his face, reported in full form:

- Comrade military doctor of the 3rd rank! The medical staff of the brigade accidentally gathered for a meeting on the occasion of honoring the blessed memory of their dead colleagues. In a word, a reminder. We ask you too.

"Ah-ah-ah, what a sly one. Said the big boss is calling. How could I not come? Not the time for such a thing. I have to go to the brigade headquarters for a meeting. And it's a sin not to support you. Eh, was not, come on!

Shepshelev began pouring alcohol from a flask into mugs. Who diluted it with water, who left it like that.

"Well, let's remember our brig doctor Rappoport, medical instructor Lyuda, and all our comrades who died. May their memory be preserved! Modzelevsky raised his mug.

- Well thought out. May their memory be preserved! The graves are shared and will disappear over time. Nothing will remain. Relatives will not find traces. At least write to them how it was. I was going to write everything, but it did not work out. I give you my word - I will write how they died. Blessed memory to them!

We all drank standing up, began to eat bread, stew from a common can.

- Another toast! shouted Gomelsky. - For all the survivors and that the toasts were not the last in life. For a life!

- You need to drink for this one!

- So that it was not the last in life!

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— Eh, was not, pour a couple more drops. I don't believe in God, but symbolically, even such a muck should be drunk for such a toast - not the last in life! Hasan-Zade added a quarter of a glass of water to a drop of alcohol, drank half, sniffed the bread and said: "To our victory and to a non-medical toast - to death ..." he fell silent for a moment and added: "German invaders!"

He overturned the rest of the liquid to the bottom, turned the mug over and put it upside down on the table:

- All. I went and you follow me!

We sat for another half an hour, remembered the junction of the 74th kilometer, the state farm named after. Yurkin, Zetas, Stalingrad crossings... Once again they knocked over drop by drop from mugs.

- Yes, but when can I get medicines? I turned to Shepshelev. After all, he came for it.

- Tomorrow I'll go to receive in the front warehouse and after tomorrow you can come.

"Thank you for remembering our colleagues and not forgetting us," and Maya and Zoya went to the dressing room for an appointment.

The three of us left the medical platoon. They left Gomelsky at the headquarters of the brigade, brought Modzelevsky to his battalion, and already alone went to his company.

Sunday, September 13, 1942 FISHING.

In the company, they somehow found out that our commander had crossed me out from the list of awards he had previously submitted to the chief of staff of the brigade. It would be better if they didn't know about it and I wouldn't know - it would be easier for me - I wouldn't harbor a grudge. Many sympathized with me, expressed regret. I avoided the commander, and he did not notice me. Difficult time for me. It did not matter that I would not receive a medal or an order. Didn't regret it. I was more offended by his act. Why did he do it? [Where is his conscience? Deprived him of fried potatoes, and he decided to take revenge. He took it as an attack on his personality. I acted justly on duty, and he took advantage of the power and acted petty, unfairly. Who will judge us? I am powerless

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before the authority of the commander. I have to leave the company or the brigade in general.

Returned to the company. Gloomy thoughts interrupted resounding explosions near the river. Ran. Our grenades jammed the fish. I don't know who authorized it, but the foreman of the company, Nikolaev, was in charge of this operation. He threw grenades into the water under the steep bank, into the bushes, into the pits, walking along the bank upstream. Below the explosions, along the river, pike up to one meter long floated up belly up and, like whitish sticks, floated downstream. Several people were already swimming naked, picking up fish with their hands and throwing them ashore. Red Army soldiers and commanders collected fish near the shore. They finished off the bouncing pikes, some with boots, some with a stick. Someone dropped a duffel bag. Pikes, for some reason only pikes, like logs, went downstream, and some of them went to the bottom. In the water, the swimmers continued to struggle with the stunned fish. Most of it, when trying to pick it up, suddenly came to life and briskly went into the water to the screams, hooting and laughter of people standing and running along the shore. The foreman of the "Kroshka" auto platoon walked along the coast and was indignant:

- After yourself, at least a flood. Why kill so many fish? Insatiable throats, do not know the measures. So many of them will die, you bastards! - and he headed upstream to the foreman Nikolaev.

People forgot about everything. Several dozen people rushed along the shore, discarded the fish, finished it off with whatever they had to. None of those present thought to stop this massacre. People were seized by excitement, the sense of proportion was gone. How much for this fish? People didn't go hungry. Three times a day, the lids of the kitchens with hot food were opened for them.

It is not known how long this bacchanalia would have continued if it were not for the intervention of the political instructor of the company Titov. He ran along the bank upstream towards the foreman who was throwing grenades. Senior Lieutenant Titov drew his pistol and fired three times into the air, shouting as he ran:

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- Stop the robbery! Get out of the river!

The shots, as well as his cry, were heard loudly, and people suspended their action. He ran up to the sergeant-major and was explaining something to him, brandishing his pistol. Then he returned downstream to the main group of people.

— You've gone mad, your mother... You're losing your human form! Why did they kill so many fish, barbarians? A few tens would be enough, but you filled more than a hundred, and how many you ruined. And the squad leaders here and platoons! Why didn't they stop this wild trick of subordinates? Collect fish in one place!

People began to demolish the fish in one heap. Part of the fish was left in the company. We decided to cook fish soup for everyone for dinner. The rest was sent to the command of the brigade. I also drove this car. They drove me to the headquarters, from where I went to the medical platoon. He took with him two pikes, each a meter long.

I put them in a duffel bag and brought them to the medical platoon. He brought them into the tent to Dr. Gasan-Zade, put the bag on the ground, unfolded it and said:

— Help yourself, from the periphery to the center. Just got caught today.

What are you thinking, colleague? Oh, what a beast you brought! Did you catch it yourself?

- No. Our people caught. Ukha will be for dinner. I decided to bring it to your ear. Eat for health.

A car is waiting for me - I left.

Monday, September 14, 1942 RELATIONSHIP

Woke up late at night. I was awakened by the distant rumble of cannonade, distinctly heard in the pre-dawn time from the direction of Stalingrad. Aerial bombs were exploding, apparently of large caliber. Explosions of artillery shells were not tapped here.

Long-suffering, tormented city! How would you survive?! So many people and technology go to help. And our turn will come very soon. Endure. try

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sya. There is nowhere to go. The enemy daggered you in many places, went to the Volga. And you hold on. Will help you. The whole country will help. The distant bomb blasts continued. Erases the bastard city with faces of the earth.

I took a sample, had breakfast and got ready to go for medicines and dressings. I wrote an application, a demand, took a duffel bag and went to the medical platoon. I found the head of the pharmacy - military feldsher Shepshelev. Gave him a request.

Shepshelev gave me a gauze bag with dressings, a set of splints, and two stretchers. I didn't have them, they left with the wounded. I didn't give half a liter of alcohol. He said that they had already been used at the wake. I think that the other of us did not receive the same amount for one "event" held. He put the medicines in a duffel bag.

"I went to the headquarters in the hope of finding our car or begging for some to take the medicines to the company. I thought about Maya. In general, I caught myself on the fact that it occupies my thoughts more and more at any time of the day. Maybe this is love? Is attraction to a woman already love? Is Modzelevsky and Panchenko in love? Panchenko, as I understand it, is forced. She needed at least someone to be with, so that others would not pester. And Leni love? He's fine as long as she's around. But why does he offend her, as she told me? Do Sadovsky and Lozhkina have love? Sadovsky brigade commander. Young, energetic, boyishly perky, proud. Everyone and everything is subject to him. It is difficult to command a brigade, it is a big responsibility. And there was also a need for a woman. Is she a hindrance to him? Apparently not. She suits him. Young, comparatively beautiful. Doctor. And always there. The situation allows and conditions - a separate car with a booth. Maybe they'll get married. So what do I have for Maya? I do not want her to get along with Maximov. That's for sure. Jealousy? I do not know what it is, but I understand that they do not fit together. Would be unnatural, against

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their relationship with such a difference in years. This is what I think.

Went to headquarters. And wow, Maya is coming towards us with a sanitary bag in her hand. Unexpectedly, I got up. She hasn't seen me yet. She walked thoughtfully, her head bowed. Everything on her sat neatly: a cap, a tunic, a slightly cropped skirt, chrome boots, a belt. I admired, my heart began to pound, I caught my breath. She noticed me, came up, flushed, excited, her eyes lit up with joy:

- Hello. Here is an unexpected meeting, although I was waiting for you and even thought why not come.

I looked at her. So much joy on the face, in the whole figure. She put her hand on my forearm.

"Show me off, we haven't seen each other for so long, we'll talk." How glad I met you. How happy for my family. Why are you silent?

Red Army soldiers, commanders, were walking around, looking at us, greeting the doctor, she answered. I only saw her.

Are you really glad to meet you?

"Of course, we are friends.

How are you now, have you received any letters from your relatives?

- I received letters from my mother. She is alive, her stomach hurts - her food is bad. And how are you?

- Everything is fine. Mother with sisters and brother in the Urals, found out their address and wrote to them. I don't know anything about my father. I know that you safely crossed the Volga. I was no longer afraid for your life, but I was afraid that you would jump out in marriage.

- I didn't jump out of marriage, but everything can be.

Are you from Maksimov? I asked pointedly.

- Yes, - and somehow wilted.

- Coming?

- Courtesy.

"Tell him that we love each other and we will get married." He will back off.

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- You are bad, again for the old.

"Then I'll tell him."

- It is forbidden. He will get rid of you, transfer you somewhere to another part. I won't involve you. Somehow herself.

- The last time I propose - we will sign, and let everyone know. There is no other way out. They will stop pestering you, including Maximov. He's a smart man, he'll understand. If we stay alive after the war, we will get divorced. Everyone will go their own way.

- Well, how is it possible?

"I won't pretend to be close if you don't want to," somehow escaped me.

She stared straight at me, and I saw in her eyes something like reproach, something like contempt.

- We will be friends.

"It is impossible to bind yourself and bind you. Sadovsky with Zoya as husband and wife. He promised her to register the marriage. But so far it does not, because it is impossible now. No, no, she said firmly.



"Of course, you wouldn't actually marry me. I am a nurse and you are a doctor. Unequal marriage. But I propose a fictitious one.

- It's not about the profession, position, but about the person. Why do people not understand that a woman is not only an object of love, pleasure, but a person, and she wants to have just human relations. Let's not talk about it anymore. I feel like we're going to fight, but I don't want that. Will we stay friends?

- Let's stay friends. You can count on me. I will always be happy to be of service.

We have already approached the medical platoon. She stopped. Me too. She wrapped her arms around her neck, gave a peck on her cheek, and jumped away before I reached out my arms to her and even had time to think of anything.

"Thank you, my friend, I ran, see you later," and disappeared around the bend in the path.

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I continued to stand, not understanding how I should continue to relate to this woman. There was a chill between us. By parting, she melted him. After all, she kissed me. Even as the mother of a child. I wished to remain friends. This is not small, but with a woman it is apparently impossible. It is hardly possible only friendship between a woman and a man. Even if they respect each other very much. But friendship with such a woman is a great happiness. And I don't dream of more.

I went to Dr. Gasan-Zade and asked him for a car. He allowed the medicines to be transported in the ambulance of the medical platoon.

Tuesday, September 15, 1942 REPLENISHMENTS ARRIVE!

Replenishment continues to come to us. 5 T-60 tanks for the 1st tank battalion with fully manned crews arrived in the company under their own power. In the company they undergo technical inspection and maintenance. The cars are new, they have not been in business yet, as well as the crew members. These machines are far from the T-34, which has proven itself so well.

An unpleasant conversation again took place between the commander of the transport platoon, Senior Military Technician Manko, and his assistant, Junior Military Technician Naumov. The driver Khaydarov complained to his commander Manko that the junior military technician Naumov had climbed into his truck at the brigade warehouses the day before, opened the box and arbitrarily took five cans of canned meat, which they had brought from the army warehouse for the brigade. When handing over the cargo, it was very difficult for the driver to justify himself for the opened box in front of the head of supply, with whom he went to get food. He did not betray Naumov, he said there that he had not seen anyone, and at the same time did not want to be thought badly of him.

Manko condemned Naumov, scolded that he was disgracing himself before the Red Army. Naumov replied that Manko is not a beam

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neck of it. The difference is, said that the drivers give him out of the trips, while he took it himself. Warehouse, they say, will not get poorer. Naumov even earlier acted only as it was beneficial for him, and did not take into account others. Selfishness and rudeness prevailed in his behavior and actions - these were the features of his character and upbringing. It was unpleasant to communicate with him, especially to have him in his platoon as a deputy.

Wednesday, [September 6, 1942 FIRST AWARDS.

51 people were presented for government awards in the brigade. From the company of technical support - 7 people. Immediately after dinner, this group, in boots polished with a car, in hemmed white collars, in new uniforms, left in a ZIS-5 covered with tarpaulin for

brigade headquarters. We returned for dinner. A company was built, and the commander led the awardees in front of the ranks and said that they were the most distinguished from the company during the fighting of the brigade near Stalingrad. Although these comrades did not fire cannons or machine guns at the enemy, they contributed to the success of the brigade as a whole with their selfless work in repairing military equipment. He called on all the rest and the new recruits to follow the example of those awarded.

The personnel of the company warmly congratulated their comrades on government awards applause.

"There is no end to the war in sight. Everyone still has a chance to get a piece of iron on his chest, - said one.

- This is not a piece of iron, but a sign of valor, a feat of arms. What will be known about us? Fought. But as? The order or medal will be an eternal document about the war. Children and grandchildren will be proud, - put in another.

- And who will get the mound - will be lost and no memory?

"So that's the fate of it.

What is left of the dead? What is their memory? Will they ever find out who is in the mass graves along the roads and in the steppe, and will they be preserved? The Germans will level them.

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- My wife wrote that she kept my letters as the most precious thing in life, and asked me to write more often and in detail. Maybe that's all that's left of me," said the Red Army soldier.

Thursday, September 17, 1942 WE PARTICIPATE IN THE CREATION OF A TANK COLUMN.

There was a rally right after dinner. Political instructor Titov spoke and said that the soldiers of the Red Army, collective farmers, workers, intellectuals, individual citizens and enterprises of our country contribute money and jewelry from their personal savings for the construction of weapons for the Red Army. Tank columns, air squadrons and other weapons are being built with these funds. This is constantly published in newspapers, reported on the radio. The soldiers of our brigade and the entire front decided to pay a monthly salary for the construction of a tank column. He urged us to follow their example. This proposal was supported by Gulenko, Korol and others. They voted unanimously to pay a monthly salary for the construction of a tank column. I and many others did not receive money, they only signed the statements. All their financial support was sent to relatives according to the certificate. We were told that one monthly salary would be withheld from us.

Friday, September 18, 1942 REPLENISHMENTS IN MEDSIANVZVOD.

I feel that we do not have to stay long in the village of Novy. The local population calls him Rybachy. There is a replenishment, while crumbs. We received several GAZ-51 wheeled vehicles. Three T-40 tanks arrived in the company for maintenance. The tanks are new, but old-fashioned. All of them went to the 1st tank battalion. The crews are manned by seasoned warriors. Many with orders and medals. We have already been at the front and in hospitals. People with

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replenishment told about the extremely difficult situation of our troops in Stalingrad. They believe that the enemy is about to overturn our troops into the Volga, despite desperate resistance.

The driver, the Red Army soldier Sulyan, has been somewhat exaggeratedly kind to me in recent days. At noon he came up to me and, with the air of a conspirator, conveyed to me greetings from Maya.

— How do you know her?

- I know, I had a conversation, I conveyed very good greetings, - and smiles broadly.

He intrigued me.

- How did you meet and what is your relationship with the medical platoon?

- I have. I brought a friend there the other day, a nurse, and today I saw her.

"What does Doctor Maya have to do with it?"

- Very much to do with it. They live together in the same room, and I was there. I asked about you and hi, said, pass it on, so I passed it on.

- Wait, what kind of girlfriend did they have there? There are no more women there, except for Zoe and Maya.

- Has already. She is my girlfriend. I brought it from the reserve three days ago. We made friends. She, like me, is twenty-seven. Medical instructor. Very beautiful. Russian woman. The hair is a little light, not very long and twisted. And not thin, everything you need is there. That's it, he took a deep breath. As he spoke, he spread his arms colorfully and smiled happily.

"Now I understand a little. Congratulations.

"Thank you," he kept smiling, "we are already good friends. Very well.

- When did you have time?

- Do you need a lot? Night in the cabin together. And they went into the bushes ...

- Well well! I could only say.

He smiled broadly and said:

When you go there, tell me. I'll give you a lift.

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Thanks, I'll tell you.

I understood his behavior, courtesy to me. Something common entered into our interests - medical platoon.

Kolya Manko asked me before dinner whether he took or gave canned food from our common box.

- I did not take and did not give to anyone.

- This is again that yak of his - Kostya. cholera on him. Well, the tenant. Himself will not put anything in the box, but to drag a lot. And he won't ask. I wanted to give Gena a jar for the road, but it was empty there. Sugar and tea also took away. Well, dependent! Nikolay got upset.

Indeed, Kostya Naumov behaved very unceremoniously in everything. I can't forget the pharmacy robbery and forgive him for it. He thinks only of himself and makes sure that he does not feel bad, regardless of others. This is very noticeable in small things, I think that in a big, serious case against him

cannot be relied upon.

He left to get wheeled vehicles. I received dry rations for two days with the driver. And he took other people's stocks with him. Up to now, no one has reckoned with those meager reserves, which sometimes

were created. Shared the last one. But Naumov's behavior and communication with him was unpleasant. If an example of an egoist or a scoundrel were required, then Kostya was quite suitable for this.

Saturday, September 19, 1942 KAMYSHINSKY WATERMELON.

Drivers brought watermelons from the flights, which they picked up on melons. Many have eaten them for the first time. Here we eat watermelons to the fullest, and in Stalingrad the terrible massacre is almost at an end. Our Germans are overcoming. There is less and less territory and chances to keep the city. Our troops will be thrown into the Volga. What will happen next? He will go to Moscow, take the Caucasus, Leningrad will fall. Sleep didn't come. It was not in vain that I asked Kitaichik how long we were going to retreat? What about command, Comrade Stalin? When will they come up with something? And it's scary to consult - it's time to sew

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feminine at its best. How else will China-chik react to my questions?

Heavy fighting continues in Stalingrad. It is very difficult for the city to hold on.

Sunday, September 20, 1942 WHAT WILL THE PEOPLE BE AFTER THE WAR?

Politruc Titov read to us every day the newspapers of the Central and the Stalingrad Front. The enemy in many places reached the Volga, the line of defenders in the city along the Volga narrowed sharply, sometimes to two hundred meters. Maybe overturn our defending units in the Volga. What will happen? And the units to the front all go and go past us. How many lives have been swallowed up by the war and more the insatiable will swallow.

Our days pass without much happening. The brigade is being replenished with personnel, weapons, tanks of the old models - T-70. Naumov returned without wheeled vehicles. Somewhere to the north, trains were bombing, and the cars did not reach their destination. They said they would call again when they arrived. The Red Army soldier Ozheshko returned from the hospital. I'm glad I found my part. And we are happy for him.

They talked about what would happen to bad people after the war. We are confident that victory will be ours. It cannot be otherwise. And people like Naumov, Mikhailovsky and others like them may well survive after the war. Will their nature change? Unlikely. They will remain so even after the victory, they will be participants in the war and winners, they will, without hesitation, watch out for personal gain. To such people the concepts of conscience, justice, Honor will not stick. How will it be?

The war would have ended, and there ... it will be seen there. I would like to hope that there will be no conditions for the growth of any trash there. People, people will take care of it.

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Monday, September 21, 1942 LICE IN THE MOUTH.

I checked the auto-platoon for lice in the morning before breakfast, and found insects in several people. Only ten days ago they washed in the bathhouse and changed underwear and uniforms. Underwear was disinfected. These are several drivers who were constantly on flights and spent the night where they had to, turned out to be lice. After breakfast, the whole company was built and checked. Lice was also found in some repairmen. The company commander scolded me as much as he could, believing that I allowed lice, reported this to the brigade headquarters, and the wheels started spinning. The foreman of the company went to the warehouse of the brigade and received sets of washed linen that had been disinfected, and part of the uniform, soap. We were informed that the bathing of the personnel in the village bath would be after lunch. By this time, a cleaning and pest control team should arrive.

After lunch, a group of commanders from the brigade headquarters arrived with the task of checking the condition of the equipment and equipment of the personnel. They were dissatisfied with the test. Cars are understaffed. There are no spare parts, many without pumps, spare tires, jacks. This is how they arrived. The personnel, especially newcomers, are not fully equipped with gas masks, personal weapons, and sapper shovels. All the shortcomings were rewritten and the heads of services were ordered to eliminate everything within two days.

This event delayed the bathing of personnel in the bath. It began after dinner and took place in the dark. The uniform was completely subjected to disinsection treatment in the chamber. Also underwear, which was handed over for washing.

Tuesday, September 22, 1942 FOLK TREATMENT.

After breakfast, as usual, dressings. There were patients with colds, tonsillitis. Military engineer Vanin feels worse. Exacerbated peptic ulcer.

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Besalol tablets no longer have a special effect. I invited him to go with me to the medical platoon. Maybe they will offer some effective medicine, but he refused to go. I decided to go myself. I reported to the commander and went to the medical platoon. I found Gasan-Zade and reported about Vanin.

Bring him in and we'll see. An ulcer can break through, then there will be trouble.

- Doesn't want to go. Asked for medicine.

- Bring it. Maybe while we are standing here, we will send him to the hospital, we will fly. Without seeing the patient, I cannot prescribe medicine. You can't do that. Understood?

- Understood. Will I find Shepshelev?

- You'll find it. Having fun with the new orderly. Listen, I still lacked such a slut, it will be said between us. If only they were already together. But this one won't last. Will go hand in hand. Go take a look. You were still missing there," he stood up, came up to me and said: "Sorry for saying so. Very angry, but not your fault.

And I went to Shepshelev. Found him and asked for medicine.

- I heard that you have a new medical instructor. Good?

- For whom it is good, but for others it is an impossible dream.

- Is it good for you?

"It's good for me, but what about you?"

- Nothing for me. You work with her.

- The fact that I have to work with her ...

- I need medicine. The ulcer is heavy. Give me some soda and a tincture of opium or belladonna.

"Do you have any pills, besalol?"

Yes, but they don't help.

- Write down what you want.

I prescribed medicines and received them.

I decided to visit Maya. Went to the dressing room. There were several people at the door waiting to be received. Mostly they were in bandages. I went into the dressing room.

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— Greetings, doctor!

She turned to me, her tired face lit up with a joyful smile.

- It is you? I'll finish the dressing now. Although it is necessary to release all the sick. Did you want something?

- I have a patient with an exacerbation of peptic ulcer. Pain, vomiting. Besalol tablets do not help. I would like to give him something more effective.

- I'll look at it now.

- He is not here. Didn't want to go. I took tincture of opium and soda for him. He drinks it a lot. Is everything OK?

"It's fine, everything's fine," and quickly added, "Can you wait?"

"I must go," I said for some reason, although I could have waited, "I am in a hurry, they are waiting for me."

"Come back after dinner, I'll be free." Can you?

"I don't know if I can. If I can, I will. All the best.

She remained standing with tweezers in one hand, scissors in the other. I stood at the door, backed away, opened the door and went out. I did not dare to go to Dr. Maya after dinner, as requested. Long thought about it and did not go.

Wednesday, September 23, 1942 EVERYONE IS WAITING FOR A REPLENISHMENT.

There is no doubt that we will perform for days. The situation of our troops in Stalingrad is such that it is already difficult to imagine. How else are they holding up? From the headquarters of the brigade today they re-checked the condition of the equipment and the equipment of the personnel. Over the past two days after the check, everything has relatively tightened up. It was not possible to fully equip the vehicle with everything necessary. There were not enough spare parts, and so far they have not been brought up from higher warehouses. Drivers of vehicles received carbines, and some BIRD submachine guns. The 1st tank battalion received another small group of old T-60 tanks. In the 2nd tank battalion

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there were no tanks. No news from the Urals. They waited from day to day.

Before dinner, the driver of the transport platoon approached me. Complained of severe itching in the pubic area, perineum. Looked it over. It was pubic lice. They sucked blood and caused intense itching with their secretions. He picked up from one woman, with whom he spent the night several times, being on distant flights. He cursed terribly when he found out. I did not have medicines to take them out, which I told him about.

"I'll burn it with gasoline or diesel fuel," he said.

- You can't do that. You will cause a skin burn, and lice may remain. Tomorrow I run to the medical platoon. Maybe I'll find something there.

From the part form:

The staffing of the 254th tank brigade on 09/24/42:

The 1st tank battalion has 7 T-60 tanks, 2 T-40 tanks, 4 T-20 tanks (13 tanks in total). The 2nd tank battalion has no combat vehicles. 49 wheeled vehicles, 11 special vehicles, 2 tractors, 1 passenger cars (63 vehicles in total). Personnel of 576 people.

Thursday, September 24, 1942 FOLK METHOD OF TREATMENT.

In the morning after breakfast, the brigade's deputy chief technical officer, Lieutenant Colonel Ivanov, set the task for the company: by the end of the day, all the equipment of the brigade units that we have under repair should be sent to them in good condition. The brigade has a long march to the new assembly area.

The brigade is not yet fully manned. From the Urals, our representatives, who left for the tanks, have not yet arrived. With what to go into battle? How to perform? Maybe they will replenish us on the way or at the place of a new deployment.

I ran to the medical platoon, warning Manko that I needed to get an ointment for his driver. I asked him

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watermelon - I decided to treat the medical sanatorium. Allowed, of course.

- Bring joy to your treasure - treat her.

- What a hell. I am for everyone.

- We know, we know.

He took two watermelons, put them in a duffel bag and went out into the darkness. In the medical platoon, the loading of property onto vehicles was in full swing. Everyone was running, fussing, looking for some packaging, filming something. The usual loading bustle.

"Why did you come," Dr. Gasan-Zade called me, "didn't receive any drops?"

I need ointment. Gray mercury. Pubic lice are removed.

— Wah! Find out when to do it. We're going on a hike, and you take out the lice. Don't make people laugh. What is the animal in the bag?

- These are watermelons. Brought a treat.

- Who are you going to feed?

- Everyone.

- Then call everyone, what are you standing for? Perhaps I'm better, - and he shouted at the top of his voice: - Break. Everyone to me!

I laid out the watermelons from the duffel bag.

- Hey, what beauties! Ivanov, give me the knife. Mayan! Bring the tray, I'll cut it myself.

What tray can I find here? Although I am now.

She brought a piece of oilcloth, Ivanov handed the doctor a knife, and the operation to cut watermelons began right there, on the ground, on oilcloth. The doctor handed each one a slice. I remembered that I needed an ointment for the driver, and told Shepshelev about this.

- You can't help with ointment. I know the folk way to destroy pubic lice and I recommend it to you.

Everyone stared at him.

- You need to rub the brick, sprinkle the powder with snuff, mix well and pour it on the pubis. The lice will sniff and start sneezing. In doing so, they will smash their heads against bricks and die.

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Silence reigned. Everyone seemed to comprehend what was said, and suddenly everyone burst out laughing. Haven't heard that in a long time. People around were holding on to their bellies, moving from place to place, bending at the waist, Ivanov was rolling on the ground - to which everyone laughed contagiously. I stood there for a very long time without laughing. Everyone considered what was said. I was laughed at or a joke that did not reach me. Seeing my bewildered look and pointing fingers at me, they laughed even more. It must have looked stupid. I especially remember the sonorous, squeaky, choking laughter of Zoya Lozhkina. Maya clasped her hands in front of her, pressed them to her chest and quietly, as if sobbing, laughed, staring at me. Some shackles fell from me, everything became simple and easy, and I also burst into laughter, which amused those around me even more and caused a new outburst of laughter. [Shepshelev laughed louder and longer than anyone at his joke. Gradually, the laughter began to subside, although the smile never left his face. I was the first to come to my senses that I had to run to myself.

- What about ointment? I turned to Shepshelev.

- I'll offer you a folk way. Use it," which caused an additional burst of laughter, but people were already tired, wiped away their tears, and gradually began to calm down.

"Don't play the fool, I have to run," Yak turned to Shepshelev again, "how can I get them out?"

"I don't have gray mercury ointment. I don't know the other one.

- Take green soap. Let him smear parts of the body and wash everything off after 20-30 minutes. Not a hundred percent guarantee, but it can help. Repeat again after 5-7 days. At the same time, linen should be changed, - Dr. Lozhkina advised.

"Come on, I'll show you where the green soap is before they load it," Maya led me to the porch of the house and pointed to a wooden barrel. - Now ladies, what to take.

She took out a piece of oilcloth, scooped up a little of this soap, which was similar in consistency to SolidDol.

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- I will accompany you.

- I say goodbye to everyone.

He returned to the place where they ate the remains of watermelons. Smiles were still preserved on the faces, jokes were cheerfully exchanged.

I said goodbye to everyone by the hand and went to the gate, behind which Maya was waiting for me.

- You made us laugh. Thanks for the watermelon.

- I wanted to deliver you intact, but they intercepted on the way.

- It turned out very well, - and laughed softly, - they distracted us, amused us. Thank you.



- Follow me no further.

I stopped, threw my empty duffel bag over my shoulder onto my back, put my hands on Maya's shoulders and said:

- God bless you! And I will beg him about this," I said very seriously. - See you. I'll miss you.

Thanks for your attention and warmth. See you. See you later," she repeated, clasping the back of my head with her hands, bent her head, kissed me quickly on the lips, hurriedly dodged a possible oncoming kiss and ran away to her place. - See you! - I heard in the dark and wandered to myself.

They said that after dinner they read out the order. Our 254th Tank Brigade is attached to the 51st Army, and we have to set out from the village of Novy (Rybachy) and make a many-kilometer march southward along the Volga and concentrate in one of the districts. According to tentative calculations, the march was to be more than four hundred kilometers away. Then - crossing to the right bank of the Volga.

Friday, September 25, 1942 ORDER TO MARCH TO THE NEW LOCATION!

Didn't sleep last night. We completed the repair of equipment and sent it to the subdivisions. They packed their belongings into cars and refueled. Autumn came early

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and winter is coming soon. A new test was approaching - the cold.

Early in the morning, with a threat from the brigade's deputy chief technical officer, engineer-lieutenant colonel Ivanov read out to us the orders of the ABTU of the South-Eastern Front, according to which four tanks with their crews were to be received from a neighboring tank brigade. Further, the task was set to form a group of engineering and technical support for the repair of lagging equipment on the march.

Engineer Lieutenant Colonel Ivanov warned that the march was very difficult, the equipment was old and the repair team had a very difficult task to ensure the march.

The brigade followed in one column. Our company closed the battle formations, and at the very tail followed the technical support group, which included me.

Saturday, September 26, 1942 MARCH ALONG THE VOLGA.

The 254th tank brigade follows the marching column down the Trans-Volga. We thought that we would receive personnel and equipment, we would be staffed up to the required staffing table, after which we would be sent to the front. But this did not happen. The thought never left us: what are we going to fight with? There are few tanks - less than two dozen and the old model. And how many will come?

During one of the stops, we talked about the serious understaffing of our brigade in tanks and other military equipment and personnel. What was the point in a hasty departure in such an incomplete composition? And these tanks may not reach the target. And what's the point of them?

Sargsyan replied:

"And they are worth something if they were in abundance. And they are few. The engine life of a tank is limited by mileage. It is customary to deliver them to their destination by rail. These tanks on such a long road will use up their motor resources and become useless in combat.

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- Maybe there are waiting for us tanks from the Urals, where ours went for them. Otherwise, they would not have driven us hundreds of kilometers.

"I don't think there will be tanks there," Gen objected. "If tanks were waiting for us there, they wouldn't take junk and take the last vehicles from the neighboring brigade.

"Then I didn't understand anything. Maybe you're right. Having decided to drive these old tanks for several hundred kilometers, they knew for sure that half of them would not reach under their own power. But we decided! So there are no others. You must be right.

- The brigade is still a tank and fired brigade! And only a dozen or more old tanks ... They can't send her to the front like that. Of course, tanks and wheeled vehicles and people are waiting for us somewhere, -  
I inserted.

- Wait and see. There is only one or two days left.

So we did not resolve our doubts.

Sunday, September 27, 1942 GOT A BATTLE MISSION.

Third day on the road. The combat units of the brigade and the service company had already crossed the Volga in the Nikolsky area and were supposed to arrive in the village of Khanata, the place where the brigade was stationed. The length of the entire route from the village of Rybachy was 413 km. The lieutenant colonel engineer ordered our engineering and technical support group, headed by military technician Sargsyan, to immediately depart forward along the route of the brigade and arrive in the village of Khanata by the end of the day and take part in the preparation of equipment for combat operations. On the way, stop at every standing tank and try, as he put it, "to give life to everyone." At the same time, don't stay too long. There is little chance that the brigade will receive tanks in the assembly area. THEY are not there, and at night, perhaps, the brigade will go into battle. A company of technical support was ordered to concentrate in the village of Derben-Khuduk by the dawn of the next day, where wheeled vehicles that had fallen behind on the way would be gathered. Our group at once

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left. Out of the thirteen tanks available at the beginning of the march, only eight reached the concentration area. From Lieutenant Colonel Ivanov, we learned that the brigade commander received a combat mission: together with other units, to strike at the enemy south of Lake Barmantsak in the direction of Sadovoe and seize a bridgehead in the southern part of the Sarpinsky Lakes for the subsequent offensive of our troops.

Monday, September 28, 1942 BREAKTHROUGH THE FRONT.

Our South-Eastern Front was again renamed Stalingrad, which included the 51st Army. A lot of our troops were concentrated in the village of Khanata. A tank brigade moving into the gap could only deploy six tanks. Auto repairmen were preparing five wheeled vehicles for the raid: three ZIS-5 and two GAZ-51. The military engineer Gen. Platforms for attaching heavy machine guns were installed on the cabs of the machines. They created a group to break through a section of the front. Ours was commanded by the commander of the 1st Tank Battalion, Captain Rustikov. He settled in a single T-34. Military feldsher Modzelevsky was in one of the wheeled vehicles along with machine gunners. The consolidated detachment also included specially equipped units of the 825th rifle regiment of the 91st rifle division and a rocket artillery regiment.

The consolidated detachment under the command of the commander of the 302nd Infantry Division left Khanata at ten o'clock in the evening and at high speeds, firing on the move from all types of weapons, passed through the front line and broke through to the rear of the enemy. The defense of this area was occupied by Romanian troops. Behind the combined detachment, units of the 302nd Infantry Division and other formations of the 51st Army went into the breakthrough.

Long after midnight, the rest of the units of our brigade, which included only two tanks, three dozen wheeled vehicles, also left. During the march, random machine-gun and machine-gun fire was periodically heard.

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shooting from the flanks at our column, they fired into the darkness from our column. As soon as the darkness dissipated, we drove into Sadovoe, liberated by our troops.

Tuesday, September 29, 1942 SEIZED THE VILLAGE SADOVOE.

We entered Sadovoe early in the morning. The street along which they entered the Settlement was crowded with overturned wagons, the corpses of horses, the corpses of Romanian soldiers and officers. The barn was burning, in places houses and outbuildings were burning down. Smoke and fumes drifted through the village. On the main street, the Red Army soldiers cleared the rubble, dragged wrecked cars, wagons, horse corpses to the fences. The corpses of Romanian soldiers and officers were piled up in stacks. In the yards, in houses, on the streets, on the grounds, our troops were stationed, put themselves and equipment in order, and prepared for new fights. In the battles for Sadovoe, two T-40 tanks were lost, burned down, and 14 people were wounded, who were gathered in one of the surviving houses, where they were given first aid. There were no dead. The Romanians were celebrating some event, and most of the commanding officers were gathered at the school, where they found laid tables with various dishes and drinks. The orchestra also played, as evidenced by the scattered musical instruments. Among them were local women. The officers got drunk, the troops found themselves without leadership, which in many ways helped to crush them.

Our group destroyed two hundred and fifty enemy soldiers and officers, about a hundred horses and carts, five machine guns, four cannons, ten vehicles and a car.

Units and subunits of the 302nd Infantry Division and other units of the 51st Army were all arriving in Sadovoe. Many of them were heading along the road to Tundutovo. And we received an order to follow to Tundutovo. They moved out onto the road, but did not have time to go far. There was a gunfight ahead of us. Somebody cut the road

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part of the enemy and stopped the advance. Enemy tanks approached from the left flank, followed by motorized infantry in vehicles. A strong battle ensued with large enemy forces. The brigade was ordered to return and take up defenses north of Sadovoe. Where did the enemy come from? Romanian troops were in Tundutovo, and, most likely, the Germans approached the road.

The appearance of the Nazis was a surprise for us, and, apparently, the Germans deliberately threw units to eliminate our breakthrough.

Wednesday, September 30, 1942 GIVE TUNDUTOV!

Our troops were preparing to capture the settlement of Tundutovo. The brigade received the combat mission of being the first to break into the village, opening the way for our other units. The enemy offered strong resistance, and it was not possible to take the settlement on the move. Ours are stuck. After volleys, the Katyushas again went on the attack, but did not achieve success. Artillery began to hit our troops, the rumble of tanks was heard from the flanks. Fearing encirclement, the detachment began to disengage from the battlefield and return to Sadovoe. We stopped the enemy, and stubborn battles began, which went on for the rest of the night and morning. The defense sector was also occupied by subdivisions of the brigade together with the returning forward detachment.

Thursday, October 1, 1942 SADOVOE LEFT.

By the end of the battle flared up with renewed vigor. Fresh enemy forces approached and furiously attacked the positions we occupied. Our units defended stubbornly. After aviation training

enemy attacks resumed with even greater ferocity, and ours began to retreat.

At midnight, they returned to Khanate, where they joined up with the rest of the units that had taken up defense. They came out with only one T-60 tank. We lost about a hundred personnel, many wheeled vehicles and other military equipment.

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Our maintenance team lost one repairman killed and one wounded they brought with them.

There was no team doctor yet. After the death of Rappoport, no other has yet been sent. I wanted to talk to Maya, looked into the dressing room. She noticed me, waved her gloved hand, which held the scissors, and said:

"Come tomorrow, let's get some free." I'm glad I saw it.

- I'll try if I can.

I went to the company. Everyone slept like the dead. I reported to the duty officer that I had arrived. I made my way to Gen's flight, and someone was sleeping in my place on the side bench. As he was in an overcoat and in a cap, he parted a little lying on the floor, squeezed between them. Everything is behind. I am among my own, and this time you were eager! There were episodes of the past days: Sadovoye, a table with snacks, the wounded, all-round defense, the wounded and killed, the Romanian artillery unit on the horizon, a night break from the encirclement, shooting, grenade explosions, the wounded and killed, the medical platoon, Dr. Maya ... Warmed up, events the past days began to fade and must have fallen into a deep abyss. fell asleep.

Friday, October 2, 1942 Escaped from the encirclement.

Large forces of German troops entered Sadovoye. Our troops could not resist them in this sector either. The brigade went into battle with understaffed combat equipment.

- They thought of throwing hats at the Romanians or taking them to frighten them. That's where they dropped it. They got out on their own.

- The Germans came to their aid, and what a force! We easily took Sadovoe and Tundutovo, but the Germans intervened.

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- As if we are not at war with the Germans. How did we go, not really knowing who was in front of us, and with such small powers," someone said.

"Our business is to carry out orders, and whoever gives them knows what he is doing.

- They tickled the enemy, and bit themselves.

Such was the conversation among our people.

The purpose of this operation was to seize the bridgehead and divert part of the forces of the Nazi troops from Stalingrad, thereby facilitating the position of the defenders of the city.

Saturday, October 3, 1942 THE AWARD SHEETS ARE PREPARED.

After lunch, our entire group, which was part of the technical support of the brigade, was gathered by the company commander Mikhailovsky. Already became an engineer-captain. Together with him was his deputy for political affairs, Senior Lieutenant Titov. The commander thanked everyone for the conscientious fulfillment of their duties for the repair of military equipment and the heroism and courage shown in this. And he said that he was preparing lists for the presentation of all participants in this

operations for government awards. Who will represent, did not say. The political officer described to us the situation on our sector of the front. Two armies, our 51st and 57th, operating to the north of us, began combat operations to seize bridgeheads in the area of the Sarpinsky lakes. These counterattacks diverted part of the enemy forces from the Stalingrad direction, thereby facilitating the position of our troops in the city itself, in particular the 64th Army. Fighting will still continue in the area. Fresh forces arrive, and our brigade is replenished. The task of our company is to restore faulty equipment as quickly and efficiently as possible, and in this way we will help the combat success of our brigade, army and the entire front. Important events are coming up. It may not be a private operation. Good time!

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Sunday, October 4, 1942 NO PARTS FOR MACHINE REPAIRS.

Early in the morning, even before breakfast, a tank repair team was sent to Khanata. It was headed by Voropaev. Two T-60 tanks were to be repaired. They seized spare parts, dry rations and departed with a special vehicle of the repair platoon.

There were a lot of broken cars. There were not enough spare parts, rubber. Combined. Separate machines were dismantled to restore the rest.

Monday, October 5, 1942 OUR PEOPLE HAVE AGAIN OVER THE VILLAGE SADOVOE.

Lieutenant Colonel Ivanov arrived at dinner and reported that our troops had captured the village of Sadovoe at noon. A group from our brigade also took part: three tanks and about a hundred machine gunners. We have to leave for a new area of concentration. The march will take place at night, hidden, to some remote area in the Kalmyk steppes. It was ordered to gather all transport and personnel in one place the next day, to receive maximum food, fuel and ammunition.

Chapter Five

HIDDEN IN THE STEPPE (October 6 - November 18, 1942)

Tuesday, October 6, 1942 COLD IS COMING.

We were preparing to march to the new concentration area. We must be understaffed with people and combat equipment. Then we can do something. Even before dawn, the company commander Mikhailovsky, the commander of the repair platoon Gulenko, military engineer Gen and Lieutenant Colonel Ivanov were the first to have breakfast. The last one on his lorry - GAZ-51 and ours on the same one were going on the road. The body also accommodated guards — Red Army soldiers with carbines and grenades. They all left to reconnoitre a new place. We will come and find out what awaits us and where we will be.

Got cold. A piercing, damp northeasterly wind was blowing, with small grains of snow, at times very strong. The wind tore the tarpaulin from the cars, caps, blew through. And there was nowhere to hide from him. The drivers were freezing in the cabs - the doors were without glass on the GAZ-51 and ZIS-5 cars. Cloaks did not stay on the doors, they were torn off by the wind. The overcoat did not warm. Many climbed under the tarpaulin in the back of trucks on top of the cargo. I didn't have a permanent place. I could get into one of the special vehicles, but there was a tail of sick people behind me, bandages, and they didn't take me as permanent tenants. I don't know yet and I can't imagine how we will adapt to the cold. In the future, the same cars with open cabs, the street, the steppe, rare bushes and the sky above us. At least warm clothes were provided. And winter is coming...

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Wednesday, October 7, 1942 NIGHT MARCH.

The tenants arrived late last night. Today, before breakfast, the company commander gathered the platoon and squad commanders. He said that he had to make a night march over a hundred kilometers the coming night. The brigade follows in two columns. Our company, along with the rear - all kinds of warehouses. Two T-60 tanks and one MSPB submachine gunner's vehicle are attached to guard the column. In addition to a potential enemy, bands of Kalmyks roam the steppe, attacking single, without proper protection, our vehicles. Several gangs are operating in the steppe, formed by those who are dissatisfied with the Soviet regime. Perhaps they are connected with the Germans. From now on, our vehicles will move in groups of at least three under heavy guard. Drivers are ordered to keep their carbines on their knees in front of them and to be very careful on the way.

Thursday, October 8, 1942 MEETING WITH THE ROMANIAN CARGO.

In the afternoon we arrived in the village of Zergenta. The rest of the brigade was already there, which left before us and by a different route. They didn't know anything about what happened to us. We got into a difficult situation, but everything worked out well.

It was cold drizzling rain. Finally we stopped at a bush near a beam. Everyone stayed in their places, sat, wrapped up from the rain, where someone was driving. Those who succeeded - dozed off. Dawn was approaching.

It turned out that for the second half of the night they were standing next to the convoy of the Romanian cavalry brigade, thinking that they were ours. And they must have thought it was their unit that came up. And before dawn, when they were descending into the ravine to do their natural necessities, our people heard a non-Russian speech, the neighing of horses, and began to disorderly

' Motorized rifle battalion.

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shoot without warning our command, which alarmed everyone. Fortunately, they were more frightened, especially by friendly bursts of machine gunners and our two tanks that came out. The Romanians, it was they, quickly fled, leaving carts with fodder, food, several cars, over a dozen corpses. Our rushed to collect trophies: food, blankets, raincoats. The fodder was brought into one heap and set on fire. Mikhailovsky ordered all the products to be handed over to the food warehouse, which they basically did. Some of the products were left at home. Followed by a command to line up all the personnel. Lieutenant Colonel Ivanov spoke before the formation. He was the head of this group. He said that we lost our vigilance and could have paid with our lives. The guard did not notice the enemy, or rather, mistook him for his own. When the enemy was discovered, it was necessary to report to the command, and not to undertake indiscriminate shooting, which caused panic in their ranks and frightened the enemy, giving him the opportunity to escape. He ordered to pull out the column and be ready to march. I put the submachine gunners' car and one tank in front, the other tank closed the column and we moved into the drizzling impenetrable steppe.

All the way and the whole evening they discussed what had happened, which was overgrown with new episodes. One is better than the other. It turned out that our brigade technical support company, reinforced by two tanks and a group of machine gunners, put to flight either a regiment, or a brigade of Romanians, or the devil knows what. And there was, apparently, just a convoy with fodder. And that's great! Despite the tedious drizzling rain, everyone was in a great mood. We just defeated the enemy!

As is customary, after any combat episode that ended in victory over the enemy, those who distinguished themselves are usually presented with government awards. Perhaps this moment will not be missed if it is properly written, and they will make lists for awards. Who will be included in the award lists? Let that be the concern of the commander.

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Friday, October 9, 1942 HOW TO BE DOCTOR MAYA?

The column stopped on the outskirts of the village of Zergenta. We were not allowed to leave the cars. So all night they stood on the outskirts. The weather did not change: light drizzle and periodic gusts of strong cold wind. Apparently, the question of where we should be located was being decided. The village was crammed with units of our brigade. Local residents lived in every house in the village.

Kalmyks.

The company commander said that the company would have to make a march to the area that night, where we would stay for some time, while the brigade would receive reinforcements. We should set up workshops there and repair equipment. Our living conditions will be special. All work, movements, departures and arrivals will be carried out at night, and during the day everything should freeze so that the enemy does not guess the existence of a military unit there. He ordered to prepare cars for the march, wait for his arrival and left to reconnoitre a new area of our deployment. I did almost all the dressings for the personnel on the street near the transport vehicle, checked the food for dinner, the place where water was taken, and went to the medical platoon. I took the driver Sulyan with me. I promised to take him with me a long time ago. On the way, I learned that Sulyan had been there, and Alexandra met him well, but she was always busy and could not really talk.

- How to talk, with what sense? I asked him.

- Just. But souls to talk. As it was when he first brought her to the brigade. She is dark. There is no former sincerity. I want to understand.

Perhaps she was affectionate towards him when he brought her to the brigade. They spent the night together, as he said. They were attentive to each other for some time. What can he hope for? This is what I decided to look into.

Doctor Maya entered the gate.

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Maximov called her. She is from him. He will gobble it up on the sly. Look, don't miss! Panchenko whispered to me.

"He is a strong opponent for me," I remarked.

- Hello colleagues! Maya came up to us. - Who is a strong opponent and in what?

So, I heard the last phrase.

— Battalion commissar Maksimov is a strong opponent. In love, I blurted out.

She stopped and stared at me.

- Why are you in so much pain? You, you, you are cruel. All! These are my torments, my wound, and you are salt in the same place. No support. One googling. You will fall into the abyss - no one will extend a hand, they will still push. Looking forward to a performance on someone else's misfortune?

And with tears ran away to another courtyard.

- They stepped on a sore spot. It's hard for her, poor thing," said Panchenko. - Where should she go? It can be seen pinned to the wall. I went to her.

"Tell me, do you have any kind of relationship with her?" Semyon interrupted my thoughts.

- I treat her with great respect, as Panchenko joked to a comrade, saying that I was dying for her. Maksimov is trying to get her, and it's getting harder and harder for her to resist. And we got to her sore spot. How would you help her? Honestly, I'm ready for anything for her, but she's against it. Was pro- TIV.

- What can you do to help her? If he decides, he will achieve his goal. She has nowhere to go. Sadovsky, on the other hand, became friends with Dr. Lozhkina, and they live openly, like husband and wife.

— He can marry Zoya if they survive. They are both bachelors, and they can not be blamed. But Maximov how dares to pester?! Where is his conscience? She is still young, she has a fiancé, and where does he go, old and married?

- He wants to - get in. How did you want to help her?

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"I could, if she wanted to. You don't understand what they want. I am sure, firmly convinced that she does not want to get along with him. She categorically refused him, but he persists.

The Red Army soldier Sulyan approached.

- Doctor, go to your room. I've decided everything. There is no one here for us. Our women are still growing up, and if we survive this war, they will wait for us. And here we have no one. Went.

- I need to stay. Go, I'll be there soon. Be healthy, Semyon, see you soon!

I went to another courtyard, where the staff of the medical platoon is located. Met a nurse. She smiled broadly at me - the very courtesy - and with a grin asked:

- Who do you want?

"Where's Doctor Maya?"

"She needs a comforter, you will find her there," and she pointed to the porch.

I ended up in the hallway, if you can call it that place where cattle are kept in winter. I heard Panchenko's voice on the left behind the door and entered the room. Maya lay on the couch.

- Why did they come? Panchenko asked. - Offended and came.

Nobody wanted to offend. We decided to joke, but it turned out sideways. Maya, I'm sorry my bad joke hurt you. I didn't want this. You know I don't wish you any trouble. On the contrary, I only want the best. What happened? Tell!

"Nothing has happened yet.

Why do you go to him?

She sat down on the bed. He expected to be kicked out or burst into abuse. But she calmly replied:

He needs pills.

- Let Ivanov wear them.

- They tell me. In addition to pills, he needs to measure the pressure, and only I can do it correctly. do," she said.

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"Doctor Lozhkina is right there, I mean at the brigade commander's. Let her measure him pressure.

"He thinks that I measure his blood pressure best of all, and he immediately feels better," and smiled at something.



- Can you be more serious? I began, stammering.

- Can.

- Doesn't it threaten you?

- I feel threatened. Everyone is already looking at me as a potential mistress. And it's getting harder for me.

- Don't go to him.

But he insists and sends for me.

And you're starting to like it.

- No. No! Don't offend me! Ask...

Why are you holding on to this thread? You eat sugary, but it's a pity to quit. You need to finish right now!

- She is a subordinate, and how not to go if they ask for help. How can you finish right away? Dr. Panchenko intervened.

- Can. I proposed to marry me. Fictitious for themselves, for us, but for everyone on legal grounds, and let everyone know about it. And tell Maximov about it. That we love each other and we are husband and wife. You can sign, not live together, sometimes meet in public, and after the war we will get divorced and everyone is a free bird. Isn't this a way out of the current situation? And she refuses. That's the whole story," I finished in one breath.

- Leave me! I'll figure it out myself," she burst into tears again.

- Okay, I'll leave. If you decide, count on me. I can't think of anything else in this situation.

I got up and walked towards the exit.

— Wait!

Maya jumped up from the couch, rushed to me, fell on her knees, grabbed my hands and began to kiss them, shed tears.

- Thank you, my dear man, I will think it over ... I can't, in the end, understand, I can't

i tie you

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marriage with me, albeit a fictitious one. This is unnatural. How to live in deceit!? How to pretend This is shameless, vile. Finally, mean to you. I don't know, I don't know what to do... If I had been wounded and ended up in the hospital, then in another unit, or they would have killed 6, and burst into flames. tears.

While there were all these lamentations, tears, I picked her up in my arms. I really wanted to hug her, kiss her, but I restrained myself, put her down on the couch, covered her with a blanket and went to the door.

Saturday, October 10, 1942 UNITY OF MANAGEMENT IS INTRODUCED.

At night they marched across the Kalmyk steppe. I didn't see a single settlement along the way. Didn't sleep all night. He was the head of the car and made sure that the driver did not fall asleep and did not crash into the car ahead. |

Everyone was thinking about Maya. Do I love her? Could I be in a fictitious marriage with her? How would it look? Indeed, it is not so simple. If a husband and wife, then you need to be together, or at least sometimes together, retire. She is more prudent than I, apparently, did the right thing so far that she did not agree to my proposal.

Early in the morning, still dark, we drove up to some village inhabited by Kalmyks. The cars were pushed into two large sheds, where the cattle had recently stood. An engineer lieutenant colonel Ivanov arrived with us. He sternly warned that our stay in the village should be hidden from the enemy and from people in general. To this end, all repair work will be carried out mainly at night. Urgent work will be carried out during the day, but only in the barns. The movement of personnel around the settlement was banned during the day, as was the movement of motor vehicles and other military equipment. The kitchens were placed in one of the sheds, having allocated and enclosed a certain corner for them. The civilian population was forbidden to leave the village. On the roads leading to the village, you

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they set up guards, covering them in hastily dug shelters. They warned the population not to leave the village anywhere.

Interested in the epidemiological situation. While I noticed many patients with trachoma, especially older ones, there were also patients among children. We picked a place for a medical station closer to the kosharas in one of the houses. It consisted of two halves. One half of the two rooms was given over to us, the family remained in the other half; husband and wife and two children. He provided medical assistance in one of the two kosharas, where he equipped a special place. The personnel settled down in koshary, who where. Most of them laid straw against the wall, and settled down on it. The repair platoon made bunks for themselves, covered them with straw, tarpaulin, and warmed up to each other. Who was located in the cabs of cars, who in special vehicles. He settled down, as always, as best he could.

Before dinner, they formed a company. The commander reported that the Presidium of the Supreme Soviet of the USSR adopted a resolution "On the establishment of complete unity of command and the abolition of the institute of military commissars in the Red Army." For all political workers, as well as for the commanders of the Red Army, common military ranks and insignia were introduced. From now on, Titov should be addressed by his military rank: "Comrade Deputy Commander for Political Affairs" and no longer "Comrade Commissar". What did it mean to us? And so he trembled before the commander, obsequiously obeyed him in everything, and we did not feel that the commissar stood up for anyone, even for himself. Now, in general, no one dares to object to anything to the commander. One-man boss!

Sunday, October 11, 1942 hid in barns.

In the barns, bunk beds were built for all platoons, following the model of a repair one. The pits were not heated, but the wind did not walk there, as it did on the street. The whole day was spent on the placement of a personal

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stav, for the equipment of places for the repair of equipment. Neither I nor my comrades understood why such a conspiracy. They say that such was the order of the higher command. Nobody about us shouldn't know.

Monday, October 12, 1942 GO UNDERGROUND.

Gone are the quiet and tedious days. Car repairs were carried out at night. Divorce of the guard after twelve hours in the dark, early in the morning and in the evening. We received the task to dig caponiers for vehicles with fuel and shelters for ammunition - warehouses of the brigade, not far from the sheepfolds in a small beam. Work is scheduled for the following nights. There was not enough water for supper. The commander did not allow recruiting during daylight hours, although the well was 100 meters from the barns and there was no tea for dinner. With the onset of darkness, water was filled, and dinner dragged on until late.

on the. Reception of the sick, sleeping and resting were ordered only in the pits. Conditions for all were very heavy.

Tuesday, October 13, 1942 DAYS CHANGED FOR NIGHTS.

The bread is out. The crackers are gone. And also sand. Groats are mostly millet in large quantities, some peas and pearl barley. Vegetables - onions, dried potatoes. Millet goes both for soup and porridge. Canned food. In the early days there was fresh meat, but now they don't deliver it. Gobies and cows "walk" in the steppe. Beating is not allowed. The Kalmyks pick them up for their herds. They raised the issue with the company commander, but he categorically forbade shooting them.

A very difficult situation in Stalingrad. Bloody battles are going on in the city. The Germans reached the Volga in many places. This is where our fate is decided. And what's the point that we're buried here in the steppe. Or will there still be a sense? Stalingrad is of great importance now. He must be restrained and, apparently, we are also being prepared for this. It's about the tanks. They don't exist yet.

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Wednesday, October 14, 1942 THE CARS NEED TO BE WARMED.

At night they dig caponiers for cars, ammunition and a separate storage for fuel. They dug everything, except for the attire. The main production tool is a shovel and a crowbar.

A large group of Red Army soldiers and commanders crowded around one car, which looked rather strange. The entire cabin of the GAZ-51 was upholstered in cattle skins of various patterns and colors. The cab doors of this machine were open at the top and covered with tarpaulin at the bottom, as was the cab roof. Now the whole cabin was covered in skins. The skins were still raw and smelled peculiarly. They were not cleaned, but simply salted and dried, pieces of the skin lay in the cabin under their feet. The car was Fedka Byashirov. He made her so warm. It was clear to everyone that it would be warmer on flights by winter, and the cold was already making itself felt. Everyone liked the idea, and there was no shortage of comments.

- Well, he got the beast! Fritz will shy away from such a monster. Think a new weapon appeared.

- Come on, Fedka! You will drive fear into the whole steppe.

- How many bulls did you transfer to your beast?

Manko and Gen were standing not far away and were discussing something heatedly. The company commander was in his car in another shed. Manko followed him and soon brought him, the political officer and Kitaichik. The commander silently examined the cabin outside and inside and said that he liked the idea. He will report the brigade's deputy technical officer and, if he permits, we will insulate all open cars in the same way. And there will be meat. The whole day they discussed this event.

Thursday, October 15, 1942 IT'S HARD FOR STALINGRAD.

There was still a lot of earthwork. Cars with ammunition arrived at night. They were unloaded, put into one shelter, covered with a tarpaulin. The cars are gone. They said that in

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the next night they will bring more, and we were rushed with work. They realized that it was not in vain that it was done. In the morning, still dark, I took a sample of food - again millet porridge with canned meat, crackers, tea. I had breakfast and started dressing. There were a lot of them this time. After breakfast, the personnel lined up. The company commander went around the line and turned to me:

- Doctor! Why bandaged almost the entire company? If not the arms, then the neck. Made everyone sick. Say what's the matter?

— Calluses rubbed, and boils on the neck and in other places. We need to give people gloves. It will ruin your hands completely," I added quietly.

"We got the mittens to switch to the winter uniform," responded the foreman of the company Nikolaev.

How many pairs of gloves did you get? the commander asked the foreman.

- Enough for everyone.

- So everyone should be given mittens through the platoon commanders and let them keep them for the winter. Squad Leaders! Get gloves and leave for work in 15 minutes. Disperse!

Sergeant Major Kruglyakov arrived and struck us with unexpected news. They were fired on their way here by a group of Kalmyk riders from rifles in the area of the ravine, past which the road to Zergent goes partly. Without dismounting from their horses, they fired at the car, and when Kruglyakov answered from the cab with shots from a carbine, they disappeared into the ravine. The cab and the body of the car were pierced in places by bullets. This is not the first case in the brigade, and we were warned about this. Kruglyakov brought cereals, canned food, dried vegetables, crackers from the brigade's food warehouse. We went to rest, discussing and resenting what had happened.

Separately, on a baking sheet, fresh meat and potatoes were fried for the commander and his henchmen. After dinner, political instructor Titov left everyone near the kitchen and read the latest newspapers that Kruglyakov had brought: "Son of the Fatherland" of the 51st Army and "Stalingrad Warrior" - a newspaper of the 57th Army.

In discussions after reading newspapers and during night work, we asked ourselves: why are we hiding in this wilderness?

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Friday, October 16, 1942 "BIRTHDAY").

The secrecy of our stay, the uncertainty of the purpose, the exhausting work had an unfavorable effect on the mood of the people. Nikolai Manko was very worried because of the lack of letters from his wife, the man noticeably wilted. And for all of us, some kind of detente was needed. And Sargsyan came up with the idea of organizing a "Manko's birthday" without his knowledge. I decided to surprise him and give us pleasure in order to somewhat diversify our monotonous life. He asked me to hold this event in the medical center. The organization of the table was taken over by Kostya Naumov. I agreed with the owner of the house, where the first-aid post was located, about helping with food, for which he promised to thank him. There was also lamb, beef, vegetables and, of course, an alcoholic liquid - Kalmyk moonshine (it should be noted - a disgusting smell and taste, but no one was poisoned).

In the evening, after distributing the amount of work to the personnel for the night, Sarkisyan, Gen, Manko, Naumov, foreman "Kroshka" and I gathered at the first-aid post. When they began to congratulate Nikolai, he was surprised and declared that he had no birthday on that day. Sargsyan admitted that he came up with it to bring some variety into our lives and shake Nikolai out of despondency. The idea was approved, Sargsyan and Naumov were thanked. We sat well.

We talked about our affairs, about the situation in Stalingrad, expressed our confidence that important events await us after the staffing of the brigade, that our stay in secrecy in this area has some strategic meaning. Soon everyone went to the personnel and got involved in the night work.

Saturday, October 17, 1942 QUIT SMOKING.

It was hard work that night. Perhaps the lamb with additives was the reason. People got tired, got out of the rhythm of life, and during the day they could not really rest.

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Still tried, but the results were low. Kalmykov said that there is still a lot of earthwork.

After breakfast, he made bandages for everyone in one of the corners of the barn, whom he gave medicine to. He left for the village. Women and children were waiting for me there. It's not the first time. Whom to do the dressing, but there were also patients. Suffered from skin diseases. There have been cases of scabies. I had nothing to treat her with. He told the personnel of the company about trachoma, scabies, how to protect themselves from these diseases. There were patients with chronic respiratory diseases — bronchitis, and possibly tuberculosis. There was no medical worker in the village. Tried not to refuse help places

local residents whenever possible.

Went to the infirmary. Manko and Naumov were already resting. There was a strong smell of tobacco from yesterday. And they added with their smoke.

- Well, you smell of tobacco. Let's get some air," I opened the window. "You know what, guys. Let's quit smoking. Introduced sugar instead of tobacco. 300 grams of sugar per person per month. Let's get sugar. We'll be healthier. Is it coming?

— I agree, how are you, Kostya?

- I'll try.

"You don't have to try, but decide together. It won't work otherwise," I said. — I offer a bet on three liters of moonshine. Whoever violates the first, puts three liters of moonshine. We need such a measure. Who agrees?

"Agreed," they both answered, "we'll start tomorrow morning." Today we will smoke up to stupor and that's it, - Kostya concluded.

"Let it be from tomorrow," said Manko. I didn't have a strong craving for smoking. Smoked for fashion to support the company. I think I can quit easily.

So, from tomorrow.

An order was received from the headquarters of the brigade to send to Zergent, to the technical unit of the brigade, one military technician-motorist and five drivers with him to receive

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ZIS-5 vehicles for our company and provide them with dry rations for three days. Of the military technicians, Kostya Naumov was appointed. They left in a GAZ-51 car at night. Kostya insisted and received a dry ration for five days. The drivers were all armed with carbines, Kostya, except for the pistol - still automatic.

Cases of shelling of our cars became more frequent.

Sunday, October 18, 1942 GANGS IN THE STEPPE.

Drivers with ammunition arrived from Zergent and Khanat in the morning and said that the entire population was being evacuated from these places and other settlements. A major German offensive must be expected.

The engineer-lieutenant colonel Ivanov, who arrived a little later, clarified. He said that there was an order from the commander of the Stalingrad Front to evict the civilian population beyond the 25-kilometer front line from the front line, where these residents also ended up.

points. Regarding the work, he expressed his gratitude to the personnel and said that it was still necessary to make storage facilities for fuel and lubricants. This is a two night job. After that, military equipment will begin to arrive and the company should be engaged in its maintenance and repair. He approved the initiative of Fedi Byashirov and allowed to insulate the cabins of cars with skins. Get skins on your own initiative. I asked permission to work during the day and give people the opportunity to rest at night. He objected, said that the order to carry out all external work could not be canceled only but which, and everything remained in force. He warned about increasing vigilance for the protection of cars and on flights. A driver in a motorized rifle machine-gun battalion was wounded in the Derben-Khuduk area. Gangs of Kalmyks dart around on horseback. They fire and hide in the beams, ravines, where cars cannot go. A special group has been allocated from the army to destroy these gangs.

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Monday, October 19, 1942 GIFTS FROM THE REAR.

We picked up a group for shooting cattle in the steppe to harvest skins for cabin insulation. The foreman of the "Kroshka" automobile platoon was appointed senior. The taiga hunter must cope with this matter. And most importantly, fresh meat will appear.

After the commander appointed the amount of work for the coming night, political officer Titov told us that eight parcels were allocated from the brigade to the company, which were sent by the workers of the Yaroslavl region to the Stalingrad soldiers. In Zergenta there was a delegation of a clothing factory - a group of women who presented gifts and parcels to the soldiers. They decided not to bring them to us, but the parcels were sent.

- To whom should they be given? asked the political officer.

"The best, of course," said voices.

— And who is the best? Everyone is trying.

- Issue a parcel for each platoon. And then let the commander decide to whom, - suggested

political officer

"Let's do this," Sargsyan suggested. "After the night's work, before breakfast, we will lay out the contents of the parcels on the workbenches in the repair shed. Let everyone take what he likes. Condition: take only one thing. Let the most hard-working people in the first place. Immediately after work, or rather, who will be the first to complete the task.

- Good idea.

Well done, Samson!

Not Samson, but Solomon. The king was so wise among the ancient Jews.

- Let Solomon, but in fairness came up with.

"We'll do that," the commander decided. — Political officer, organize this business. Everybody's Free. Bring people to work.

In the morning everyone came to the repair shed. Here everyone was lined up in a row of two people. The formation order was announced by foreman Nikolaev. The first is a repair platoon,

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then autoplatoon, electricians and all the rest. They took everyone to the koshara.

Before the formation, on the workbenches, on primitive shelves made of planks between them, the contents of the parcels were laid out. There were coarse-wool socks, mittens, pouches, packs of makorka, pieces of soap, toothbrushes, clothes and shoe brushes, knitted caps, shoe polish, pencils, paper, envelopes, collars, handkerchiefs, towels, scarves. , spoons, scissors, threads, a beautifully painted mug, and among all this sat a child's doll. People somehow softened, looking at all these household items. I remembered the house, relatives, relatives. Some sniffled and began to rub their eyes with the back of their hands.

Everyone thought about his home, loved ones. They did not hesitate to wipe away a tear, wipe their eyes with a handkerchief or palm, or cough. The command followed:

- Take one subject that you like. At this step, march along the workbenches!

We set off one by one along the workbenches. Everyone got something. At breakfast they shared their impressions, joked with each other. I remembered the home environment, household items. Apparently, this episode with gifts made everyone remember the house, their relatives and friends. [where are they now and how do they live - 2nd? Will we see you? This time, few people went to rest. They wrote letters, remembered the house, talked about relatives. Without a command, people went to the workshops to the equipment that was being repaired, although they had the right to rest until dinner.

Tuesday, October 20, 1942 THE PEOPLE WAS FINALLY WASHED.

Carcasses of fresh meat appeared - the result of harvesting eggs. The last few were few. We went to the civilian camp and scored something. We agreed with some fighting point where they would leave the skins for ours. They couldn't make them. Salted and dried on the zetra. The skins became hard, like sheets of iron.

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Be that as it may, the "herd" of strange beasts - our machines looked like this - increased. The wind wasn't blowing through the cockpit like that.

The earthworks were completed last night. How long? But it got easier. We decided to wash the personnel on the same day and began to prepare for this. Prepared two barrels for cold water. Two tarps. One was girded around four trees and fastened with nails. The second one was covered with a roof from above and the edge was lowered onto the gap formed from the first tarpaulin - an entrance with a canopy. It turned out something like a yurt. They threw branches on the floor and made a drain for water. After supper, water was heated in kitchen cauldrons, and people were washed for the entire first half of the night. They let them in groups of seven people, and the duty officers from each platoon brought them cold and hot water.

This time they gave everyone new underwear. Instead of buttons, the undershirt and underpants had ties at the waist and at the bottom. They were uncomfortable: they rubbed the legs in the shins and if they were tied in a knot, it was difficult to untie them, and they were cut off.

Our passing car brought five of our drivers, who traveled with Naumov. They reported that they had not received the cars. In Zergent, Naumov was given an order, a power of attorney and sent to Khanata, where they were supposed to receive them. But for some reason they did not get the cars, and Naumov and the driver decided to stay there and wait for the next batch. He sent the rest of the drivers by passing car, he believed that they would get to the company. He did not give them the due part of the dry ration, he kept everything for himself. The drivers were hungry, they scolded Naumov very much, they said that he stopped at some woman, brought her potatoes from her relatives on the day when they were supposed to receive cars, got drunk and missed them.

Wednesday, October 21, 1942 "RAMA" VISIT.

We were not that far from the front. Around noon we heard the rumble of an airplane, the gong sounded just in time, and each of us hid where we were. A "frame" appeared in the sky.

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The ominous Focke-Wulf is a German reconnaissance aircraft, after which, according to our experience, nothing good can be expected. "Rama" flew around the village and the surrounding area, returned and dropped two small bombs. One fell on the square of the village near the well, where women were washing clothes. Near them were children. Among them, two women and a child were wounded. The second bomb fell at the edge of one of the transport platoon's sheepfolds. You turned back the corner of the barn, smashed the wheeled vehicles that were standing there with shrapnel. Fortunately, no people were hurt. At the time of the flight, no one jumped out of the barns and did not hang around the village. It was believed that the aircraft did not notice the presence of a military garrison. Shelters only the day before were covered with large protective nets.

He helped the injured women and the girl.

After the "frame" left, the commander gathered everyone and strictly forbade them to leave the barns during the day. He ordered to post a guard in the dugouts at the entrance to the village at night and change it twice a day, also at night. Take dry rations and water with you while carrying the outfit. In the event of the appearance of a "frame" or other enemy aircraft, do not shoot, so as not to betray your presence in these places.

Senior military engineer Alexander Gen left last night in search of Naumov. Lieutenant Colonel Ivanov, the brigade's deputy commander, ordered to go to Khanata, find Naumov there and immediately deliver him to the brigade headquarters in Zergenta. Find out why I didn't receive the car, if the order was lost once, when you can expect to receive cars and other military equipment.

Military technician Gen went with one of the drivers who had been with Naumov in the past and knew where he was has stopped.

Thursday, October 22, 1942 WE WARM THE CARS.

At night they brought a batch of skins from some slaughterhouse. The skins emitted a very fetid odor, which spread throughout the koshara. We decided to soak them, washed them off

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salt, blood, cleaned some of the fat and upholstered cabins with raw skins. This made it easier to work with them. Terrible "animals" came out. The chief consultant was, of course, Fedya Byashirov.

I was already running out of dressings and medicines, about which I reported to the company commander and asked not for the first time to allow me to go to the medical platoon.

"I won't let you go now. This is almost two days. You won't go during the day. Write an application and hand it over to Kalmykov. I will go with him this night, and in two days he will bring you everything.

Ozheshko installed a stove in a koshary. He made it from a two-hundred-liter barrel of gasoline. They warmed themselves near her, but she could not warm the koshara. It was getting colder, a piercing damp wind was blowing through.

Sasha Gen is back. Lieutenant Colonel Ivanov did not find and came here. He reported his trip to the company commander and came to us. Manko and I learned the following.

Gen asked the representatives of the army auto service in Khanate. Naumov approached them on the morning of 18 October. They told him to come for the cars in the evening, but he did not come. The next day, he also did not appear, and they redistributed the vehicles of another unit. When Naumov came to them, he was told that the cars were given to another unit, since he did not arrive at the indicated time. He was ordered to leave for the unit and wait there for the next assignment. He came to them once, and they again ordered him to go to the unit and wait there. I found Naumov at the address indicated by the drivers. He was drunk, as was the hostess with whom he was staying. From



the driver Gen found out that Naumov got along with this woman, brought her potatoes from relatives, coal. Naumov said that he was deceived, the cars were given to another unit, and he decided to wait for the next batch of cars. Gen told him that Lieutenant Colonel Ivanov had ordered him to return with him to the headquarters of the brig.

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dy. Naumov did not agree to comply with the order, he said that Gen should leave and that after some time he would follow him. [yong was forced to leave alone. He poured some of his gasoline into Naumov so that he could get to Zergenta or to our company.

Friday, October 23, 1942

In the morning, Naumov arrived, stumbled into the first-aid post, where I and Nikolai were sleeping. Without undressing and without talking, he lay down to sleep on the couch. Two hours later, a messenger came from the commander for Naumov. They rocked him, and with curses and swearing, he left for the messenger. The commander had lieutenant colonel Ivanov and senior military engineer Gen. What the conversation was about, we do not know - one can only guess from the look of it when he returned. Kostya smoked, didn't answer questions, just didn't notice us. He took a piece of bread out of the locker, poured a full mug of some stinking liquid from the flask, drank it all, ate some bread, lay down on the couch, covered himself with a cape with his head and turned off.

Then they learned from Gen that a very serious conversation had taken place, and the commander insisted on bringing him to trial by a military tribunal. When he was released, Ivanov said that he would report to the brigade commander at his discretion.

It was drizzling in the morning. It was already cold in our clothes. The overcoat did not warm. They warmed themselves around the iron stove in the shed. And most of the personnel did not have certain jobs. Repair work was not carried out - there was nothing to repair. The equipment did not arrive. Idleness discouraged people, spoiled the mood, especially the limited space of stay - koshara. The cooks worked, as always, and they were helped, the rest lay on the bunks, and sleep no longer came. More often heard was swearing. Letters were not received. Occasionally army newspapers and not very fresh. The newspaper Krasnaya Zvezda with an article by I. Ehrenburg and a poem by M. Svetlov went from hand to hand. The words were penetrating in him, that there will be a holiday on our street! Transport workers worked

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on the upholstery of the cabins with skins, and the bulk began to get bored. There were frequent skirmishes over trifles. The people needed something to do. It would be faster!

Saturday, October 24, 1942 NAUMOV REVEALED HIS SOUL.

Kalmykov arrived with the commander. Handed over a set of dressing material. From medicines - a trifle. He said that they themselves are sitting on a half-starved ration. If I had been myself, I would have pulled out more and more necessary things. He took what was given. Thanks for that too.

Again there was a case of shelling of drivers from our brigade by a group of riders, believed to be from local residents. Germans or Romanians would not dare to climb into these places in such small numbers. A shootout ensued and the bandits fled. There were wounded among us.

In the evening, a very unpleasant incident took place in the first-aid post. We had Gen with Sargsyan. Naumov poured out all his nasty soul, considering him the culprit of his situation. He started by calling him a nasty muzzle, that this damned Jewish nation is only doing harm to the Russians, that Gen had betrayed him, tried to drown him, instead of helping to get out of this situation, which, he believes, he got into by chance, due to circumstances, they say, that does not happen to a person. Then he said that he knew in Odessa the guys of his nation, with whom he was friends and did business, that they were the boys that were needed, they stood behind Kostya with a mountain, and Gen, they say, was an unfinished geek.

Naumov did not calm down and continued:

- Did you think to fuse me? It didn't work! I was forgiven. You," he turned to Gen, "damned nit! Such Jews were not forgiven in Odessa.

He suddenly pulled out a pistol and fired over Gen's head. The bullet left a mark in the wall. Sargsyan and Manko blocked Gen. Naumov went to the door, took the pistol on the safety and put it in a holster. At the same time, he continued to swear at Gen with multi-storey obscenities, insulting

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he cursed him and his ancestors, threatened that, if the opportunity came, he would still teach him a lesson. And left. Everyone froze. It all happened so unexpectedly. After some time, Gen, turning pale, slowly said: "Odessa tramp. Released the accumulated steam. He didn't have the guts to shoot me. He introduced us to Odessa punks and decided to scare us and establish himself, vulgar.

Here everyone spoke with indignation and condemnation. The conversation boiled down to going to the commander, telling him everything in order to bring Naumov to justice - to bring him to trial by a military tribunal. Gen asked everyone to forget this incident, not to have any conversations anywhere. Like, Naumov is an insignificant person, a coward, he will not dare to kill his own, although he is a vile person. He proposed to boycott it and put an end to it. Reluctantly agreed with [en. Each of us felt very bad. There was a feeling that we were covered in mud. For what? What is Gene? He fulfilled his civil and military duty

There was a lot of thought about why the command of the tank brigade in a combat situation forgave the criminal behavior in the episode with the cars? I recalled the episode with Naumov, when, with my involuntary help, he robbed an outpatient clinic - he forced me to pick up a medicine for him to treat gonorrhea. And this was not the last vile incident during the period of joint service in the brigade. As it turned out later, he was a SMERSH informant.

Sunday, October 25, 1942 IT IS NOT ALWAYS NEEDED TO BE PRINCIPAL IN SMALL THINGS.

The days were very sad. More lay. Again it began to seem that no one cares about us. Fresh meat is gone. Bychkov was forbidden to beat in the steppe. The skins were brought in from some kind of procurement office. Again stew, herring, millet, crackers. There were a few more barrels of herring. She smelled bad, but she was given out either for

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breakfast, or for dinner. Went back to normal. It didn't work well with breadcrumbs. Millet was cooked for the personnel twice a day, or even three. There could be millet soup and millet porridge for lunch. Sometimes there was only pearl barley - "shrapnel". Against this background, next to the common cauldrons, fresh potatoes with meat were fried on a baking sheet, and in a saucepan - rice soup or with pasta for the commander and his entourage (deputy, commissar, authorized special department and, more simply, the foreman of the company, the commander of the economic platoon, cooks and I was offered). I tried to change this situation and eat from the common cauldron, and the commander threatened to get rid of me and caused me a number of troubles. Even a small commander can afford everything. Nobody orders him. But what about the larger commanders, military leaders? Are you responsible for your actions? On whose conscience are not only "household" trifles, but the lives of millions of people subordinate to them?

The war has been going on for a year and four months. There must be an end to it, but when? It is difficult to wait and it is difficult to do nothing, as we are now.

Monday, October 26, 1942 WE GET REPLENISHMENTS.

Replenishment arrived last night. Drivers and repairmen mainly, fitters and an electric welder. Most of the older people did not fight. Other units of the brigade were also replenished. Got one Studebaker and two Dodges. The first is very powerful in terms of

measures and strength machine, two second smaller, all good finishes, beautiful. We admired them for a long time, probing every detail. The cabs are comfortable for the driver. They must be running well. Can do abroad! Still would! They don't bleed. Trying to trade. If we finish the war, we won't make such machines. While for us it's drops.

Nothing can be hidden, especially in a small army team where people live one closely intertwined life. The company was shocked by the incident with Na

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Umov. People knew everything to the smallest detail, although there were no official conversations or analysis. They heatedly discussed among themselves and everyone condemned his act. I didn't hear any sympathy from anyone. Especially people were outraged by the insult of Sasha Gene. He enjoyed great authority and respect among the personnel for his sober prudence, gravity, erudition and simplicity. Naumov's hooligan trick towards him did not leave anyone indifferent. Perhaps, under the influence of condemning public opinion, and only for this reason, Naumov asked for forgiveness from Gen, saying at the same time that he had flared up in vain then, but now he was convinced that the bastards are drivers, and not Gen, who blabbed everything in detail. Gen did not deal with him, said that he understood who he was, and henceforth did not want to know him. The command of the company and the brigade, while this act of Naumov did not understand, apparently, decided, for some reasons they knew, to hush up this case.

Tuesday, October 27, 1942 AT THE COMMANDER A FUUNCULE.

Before breakfast, the duty officer told me that the company commander was calling me. What happened again? I didn't expect anything good from his call. He knocked on the car door, went in and reported that he had arrived.

Can you treat a pimple?

- You have to look.

- Look. Sat on the neck. It just matures.

There was a small boil on the back of the head, still deep in the subcutaneous tissue.

- Yes, it is just beginning, not yet ripe.

- How to make it not ripen, but immediately passed.

"Just as a pregnancy is terminated by abortion, its development cycle can also be interrupted—opened.

- Cut?

- Yes. Cut, insert turunda. The pus will come out and the wound will heal.

"He hasn't matured yet, where does the pus come from?"

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- There is only a focus of inflammation. The hair follicle is inflamed - the place from which the hair grows. If you open it, then exudate will come out, pus will not have time to form, and then this place will heal," he tried to explain the essence intelligibly.

- What if you don't cut it?

"Then speed up its maturation.

- How?

- Ointment. There is one - ichthyol. It is possible from tar in half with vaseline. I use the latter. It is good to irradiate with blue light - there is such a lamp, but I don't have it. You can adjust the headlight, from the sidelight a reflector with a light bulb. It will also warm up.

- How will you treat?

- I will make bandages from tar mixed with Vaseline, and you will adapt the sidelight, and maybe the headlight from the motorcycle for heating and absorption. At least twice a day.

- What is the voltage?

"Battery, twelve volts.

- And how many days will it heal?

A week, maybe ten days.

- And if only lubricate with iodine?

- Longer. Two weeks or it will turn into a carbuncle.

- And what's that?

— It's a package of boils. Several purulent rods from one large boil.

- Well, you're talking about something terrible. Do ours get sick?

— It happens when there is no place to wash your neck and you walk around dirty for a long time. And when there are not enough fresh vegetables, not enough vitamins.

- I regularly eat my neck and vegetables - more than others, but why did the boil jump up?

"They've ground it, they've introduced an infection.

- Okay, let's go.

Went for my box. He treated the neck with alcohol, smeared it with iodine, put a drop of ointment and strengthened the bandage with cleol. He adapted a headlight for irradiation. Two

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once a day I had to dress him after irradiation, twice a day I had the pleasant pleasure of communicating with him. Maybe others will understand how difficult it is to be sick.

Wednesday, October 28, 1942 WHAT TO HOPE FOR?

Drivers told how surprised they were when their cars decorated with skins were met on highways, army and front depots. The cabs of the vehicles were also insulated in other divisions of the brigade. They called our "iron bulls".

One repairman fell seriously ill before dinner. Severe pain in the abdomen. By all indications, it looked like acute appendicitis. Need to operate. He reported to the company commander that he urgently needed to be taken to the medical platoon. He asked me to let him take him. He said that our cars would go to Zergenta at night and take him away. I was not allowed to accompany the patient.

- Who will make bandages for me?

- I'll make a sticker and bandage it again in a day. You need to get medicine.

- You won't go. Write a request, and I'll have someone bring you medicines.

The patient was sent on one of the passing cars.

Thursday, October 29, 1942 WINTER IS COMING.

Cold wind piercing through. The water in the trough was covered with a crust of ice. Warm linen has not yet been received. All in caps. Outside, it blows through. Sheds cannot be considered indoors - inside they are covered with frost in the corners and under the roof, a cold wind rushes in with a whistle through the cracks. Mostly they sit, not busy with work, around iron stoves, trying to keep warm. Very cold people on guard, patrols. They were given quilted jackets under the overcoat, but this is not enough. By the way they come from the guard, one can judge how cold they were. The cap is tight

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on the head and ears with turned-down lapels, a towel or some kind of rag around the neck, overcoats do not fasten due to padded jackets, and the floors are held by a belt. They dance around the iron stoves for a long time until they somehow get warm. The indefiniteness of our position, the vagueness of the situation weighs heavily on the soul.

Friday, October 30, 1942 OTHERS ARE BETTER...

The commander arrived from Zergent and asked me to bandage him. The furuncle has not yet opened, and he believes that I treated him incorrectly. He was at the headquarters of the brigade, went to the medical platoon. They offered him to open the boil. He categorically refused to "let himself be cut" and asked to be treated "without a knife". They put a bandage with ichthyol ointment on him and strengthened it with a bandage around his neck. They also gave me a jar of ointment to take with me. He reproached me for not having thought to bandage his neck - it was warmer and faster, they said, the boil would open and heal. And they offered him to do dressings twice a day, in the morning and in the evening. I told him that his bandage was twisted and the ointment was in front of the neck, on clean skin, where there was no boil. He treated the boil and the back of the head with alcohol and applied a bandage with ointment, strengthened it with cleol and wrapped a bandage over her neck. Cleol will not let the bandage move. To this the commander said that sometimes I think. After dinner, clean underwear was handed out to all personnel with the obligatory delivery of dirty ones. Washing was not organized - there were no suitable conditions.

Saturday, October 31, 1942 STALINGRAD IS BLEEDING.

Sergeant Major Kruglyakov arrived from Nikolsky with three cars. They brought food and property for the brigade. He began to talk about the exceptionally difficult situation of our troops in Stalingrad. His message boiled down to the fact that our troops there are almost defeated, are on the verge of disaster. listened

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there are many of him, and it didn't go away so easily for him. Then we learned that Kruglyakov had been summoned by a representative of the special department and had a long talk with him. After dinner they lined up a company, as usual, to move around work sites, and deputy political officer Titov spoke to the personnel. He began with the fact that near Stalingrad the situation of our troops is really difficult, that the enemy is pushing them to the Volga and has taken a number of key positions, but the defenders of the city are not going to surrender, that the city is being replenished, and we will not give up the city of Stalin to the enemy. Our beloved leader and Supreme Commander, Titov assured us, would take all measures to defeat the enemy in the city itself. He further pointed out that some, returning from flights, sow panic among our ranks with various rumors and in this way play into the hands of the enemy, undermining our confidence in victory. He called for a rebuff to the panic-mongers and cowards and added that in the future they would not do well.

Among ourselves, we discussed the statements of Kruglyakov. The result was summed up by Sargsyan:

— The Germans must breathe. There are more of us, you can't kill them all. And success will come to us, must come. The Germans can not keep such a country in slavery. Soon they will burn. Must stop them. Stalin will find the right time and means to expel the enemy. The people will not let themselves be conquered. I know from my own experience that our Caucasian people will not tolerate an enemy, just like the Russian people and other peoples.

With these thoughts, we went to bed. And the dream didn't come...

Sunday, November 1, 1942 THE WAR IS NO END.

November has come. Pre-winter month. The war has been going on for a year, four months and ten days. She has no end in sight. We are idle. We hid and sit out, or rather, lie down. Technique doesn't work. If it was faulty, they would repair it, people would do business. Everything is harder for Stalingrad. The enemy is pushing our troops. Fighting, or rather, a bloody massacre with the participation of a huge mass of people and equipment from both sides, continues uninterruptedly for days.

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and nights. Who will win? Yes, the question is who will win whom. Here in Stalingrad. And the fate of the entire war will depend on the outcome of this massacre.

Monday, November 2, 1942 WE GET TANKS.

A group of repairmen is being formed for the maintenance of a dozen T-20 and T-40 tanks received by the brigade. The vehicles are old and weak in terms of combat against the background of the T-34s that have already appeared in our country. We take what they give. So there is no better technique yet. Yes, and they are running out of motor resources. Departure of the group is planned for the night in the area of Zergenta. Last night, trucks arrived with ammunition and diesel fuel. Apparently, not long to wait for hostilities.

Tuesday, November 3, 1942 WORK AGAIN IN THE NIGHT.

Another boring, long day has passed. They announced that we would work that night as well. The soil poured out last night from the dug trenches around the pits is lighter and unmasks the terrain. We decided to cover it with turf to disguise it as a terrain. There is no sod as such – dried clods of earth pierced with grass roots. The grass dried up and the earth withered. Darker clods of surface earth were ordered to sprinkle the parapets of the trenches, which was what they did with the onset of darkness.

A boil erupted on the back of the commander's head. A very important event, especially for me. I was already very tired of daily dressings because of reproaches that I could not cure even a boil, which was demanded of me by almost every one of the past days. Put a bandage with a hypertonic saline solution. He doubted the benefits of this, they say, how can a saline solution be applied to a fresh wound. Moreover, not special medical salt, but ordinary kitchen salt, moreover, rock salt. It was sickening to FUCK WITH HIM.

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Wednesday, November 4, 1942 WINTER HAS COME.

Light snow fell all night, and they worked all night: they deepened trenches around the barns and dug new ones. The snow masked the discarded earth. Small drifts formed. People were very cold in caps, without mittens. We haven't received warm clothes yet. Often they went into the barns, warmed themselves by the stoves, and again went out to dig trenches. The ground was already freezing, and it was becoming difficult to dig. The earth yielded more and more difficultly to the crowbar and shovel. More and more material was spent on dressings. And they began to freeze in the sheepfolds: a cold wind with snow broke through the cracks and pierced to the bones. Didn't sleep during the day. Huddled at the stoves, red-hot. On the bunks, the water in the kettle was covered with a thin crust of ice.

Finally, the boil on the back of the commander's head cleared of pus. Put on a fresh bandage. He appreciated my efforts and allowed me to go to the medical platoon in Zergenta that night with the cars of the economic service to receive medicines and dressings.

Thursday, November 5, 1942 AMAZING WALK.

After midnight we left in three cars. The leader of the group was Kalmykov. I was driving in the car of the driver Fedy Byashirov. In the cab of the third car was foreman Nikolaev. He was to receive warm linen, hats with earflaps, pea coats, flannel footcloths, and some other winter clothes. In the cabin, upholstered in skins, it was relatively warm, almost no wind. There was still a strong smell of raw leather, but the main thing was that they weren't freezing. In the back of each car sat 2 Red Army soldiers with rifles. We arrived at Zergenta before dawn. I agreed that they would pick me up before leaving for the medical platoon. There was no brigdoctor yet, and Hasan-Zade replaced him. Received me as usual noisy, warm. I asked how I live. Surprised that he said very boring

we live.

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- What else do you need? There is no war here. Shells and bullets do not whistle. We sleep at night. Sometimes during the day too. We eat three times. You can play chess in one or two games. What else do you want? Do you hear! He misses. Ha, ha! Did you forget the month of August?

— I remember everything.

- Here you go. God grant that we live like this until the end of the war. What came? Requirement? Give me a sign.

And he signed the demand.

- How are you doing here and what awaits us? I asked.

- What is expected? The worst. We'll get tanks and go to battle. Stalingrad in the balance. It is not clear how it is still holding up. Breathe and wait for us.

- Is there a team doctor yet? — I changed the topic of conversation.

- As you see. I'm torn. The day begins - they come to us in a continuous stream. There are many dressings and patients, chronics. When there are fights, you can't see them, but now there are a lot of them, and there is no one to work with. Doctor Zoya openly went to the brigade commander, where he lives and spends the night, she is his wife. She said that she would soon send to the rear. Give birth to. Like this. And I don't have a doctor anymore. Wants to come. If he doesn't want to, you can't. Yes, and around Ladna bees fly like honey. But she works. You will steal Maya from me, with whom will I stay?

- I won't steal. It won't go by itself. I am a child for her. So she looks.

"Don't talk, although for a wife she is already too old for you, or rather, you are still very young. And it would be a good couple.

We are friends and nothing more. Just friends.

- Well, go to your friend, visit. Have breakfast with us. Should have brought.

Thanks, I'll go.

Many people gathered at the dressing room. Maya and medical instructor Shura Ladna worked there. I opened the door and greeted them.

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- Hello! Welcome! How are you there? Maya said.

- As you can see. Alive, healthy. Came for medicines. Hello Shura.

— Hello, hello, rare guest.

- Will you be around all day? Maya asked.

Yes, until evening. They are not allowed to travel during the day.

- You will have breakfast with us.

From the conversations at the table, I learned that the brigade began to receive tanks, so far, however, of old models, vehicles, and personnel. They may be able to get involved in the very near future. And, of course, to Stalingrad. It's a very difficult situation there. Ours are already barely holding small areas in the city itself. Desperate measures are being taken to prevent the enemy from overturning them into the Volga.

After breakfast I received dressings and medicines. I had to wait for the car until the evening. I decided to visit the military paramedic of the motorized rifle machine-gun battalion Modzelevsky and doctor Panchenko. Maya agreed to go with me. It was an amazing walk through the freshly fallen snow. We agreed to remain friends. Let us be a little kind at the meeting, and I will be a kind of screen so that others do not pester her. Before the head of the political department of the brigade, she believed that she could resist. She made these conditions. I accepted them.

- Is there any regret?

- No no. Be by agreement.

They came to the medical platoon. Dined there. After dinner, I visited the military assistant of the Gomelsky administration company. They also received replenishment and were sure that they would soon be in business.

Long waited for the car. There was enough time to mentally go over in detail this amazing walk. With darkness, our cars approached, and we departed in a column to our location.

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Friday, November 6, 1942 COMRADE STALIN HEARD SPEECH.

They just arrived in the morning. Ours received warm underwear, hats with earflaps, and pea coats. And most importantly, brick-and-mortar bread. Gray-white bread. I took a couple of loaves of bread in the medical platoon. Breakfast brought Manko. Ate porridge with bread. And tea and bread. We thought about how to celebrate this big holiday for us. In the company, they said, a festive dinner was planned, a solemn formation.

Before lunch I did dressings. They also had colds.

Many people gathered in the repair shed to listen to Comrade Stalin's speech. Ran there. A lot of people have gathered. Lieutenant Balashov installed the radio on a hill and twisted it there. People eagerly tried to make out something. Stalin's voice was calm with an accent. The crackle in the receiver and the rumble of the engine, which was heard at the door of the barns, drowned out the voice, and it was almost impossible to make out the words.

Someone tried to comment when applause was heard, they attacked him with abuse, someone called for silence, and as a result there was even more noise. Nothing was understood from Stalin's report. They hoped to find out from the newspapers for days.

Saturday, November 7, 1942 THE GREAT OCTOBER HOLIDAY.



Today is the 25th anniversary of the Great October Socialist Revolution, which established Soviet power. A great holiday for our people. In the hours of such a difficult test, I also want to mark such a day with something. We are cut off from the whole world, from all events. Temporarily went underground. And yet ... After breakfast, all the personnel lined up in a shed near the kitchen. Company commander Mikhailovsky congratulated everyone on the 25th

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anniversary of October, said that our people are in a difficult

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fight defends its gains, and called on us to fulfill the duty assigned by the Motherland. Titov, political officer of the company, gave a more detailed report. He ended his speech with a toast in honor of the anniversary of October, the great leader Stalin, and wished him a speedy victory over the enemy. We were dismissed. Each was left to himself. Kostya went to inquire about how the preparations for the festive dinner at the apartment were going. I had to bring bread. I consulted with Manko and decided to invite Sargsyan, Gen, Dyakov and the foreman of the "Kroshka" auto platoon.

We decided for the personnel to cook soup in meat broth with pasta and dried potatoes for the first, and barley porridge with portions of boiled fresh meat for the second. In stock for a long time lay a box with packs of jelly.

The commander ordered me to carefully control the preparation of food so that there would be no emergency on that day. He gave me a very strict warning.

A parade of our troops took place, and Comrade Stalin spoke to the soldiers and the entire Soviet people. Moscow is alive, and the country is alive, and fights, and wins! Do not break our people to the enemy, victory will be ours! These words of the great and beloved leader deeply sunk into our souls and instilled hope and confidence in victory over the enemy.

The company commander, political officer Titov, Kalmykov and Kitaichik did not dine with everyone, they went to their quarters, where they brought them lunch separately from everyone else. Sergeant Nikolaev went there with a flask.

Our narrow circle gathered in the evening at the medical center for a festive dinner. The owner was quite generous. We sat until late at night.

Sunday, November 8, 1942 WE GET AMMUNITION.

We drank too much. Getting up was difficult. The head was bursting, it was dreary in the soul. The mere memory of food caused trembling of the whole body and nausea. I had to go to the kitchen to take a sample of breakfast. You never know what was welded there overnight.

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It can be seen that the cooks were drunk. The attendant was supposed to pick them up, swing them. But what did they cook? He jumped up and started getting dressed. It was still night outside. The clock is the seventh hour. Breakfast should be ready by seven.

Nikolai and Kostya were still sleeping. I got dressed and left quietly.

There is revival in the mouth. The Red Army soldiers and almost all the commanders gathered near the kitchen. Some were smoking, some were washing in the opposite corner. There was always water in the washbasin - a tank and an outflow was made to the outside.

Lieutenant Colonel Ivanov arrived at the company, and with the commander left for the warehouse area. One kitchen was puffing, breakfast was being cooked. Everything was going well. They wondered among themselves what had brought Ivanov to such an early hour. Something was planned.

After breakfast everything cleared up. The brigade receives an ammunition load of shells, cartridges and other weapons, fuel and lubricants, products. It was decided to store all this in our area, and for this it is necessary to urgently equip storage facilities. After breakfast, Lieutenant Colonel Ivanov informed us about this. The company commander set a specific task. So, again, big earthworks are coming, as before, at night. The volume of work is greater than has already been done in the past. They were allowed to rest after lunch, and after dinner until morning - work. I pecked the sanitary bag with a douk. And I have to work as part of a farm platoon.

Monday, November 9, 1942 ATTACHED TO THE 51st ARMY.

They worked all night. They dug vaults in the spurs of the beam. They made convenient access roads for transport. The ground froze, a biting wind blew with snow and dust. Bonfires were not lit. Were severely frozen. By morning, the excavation sites were covered with camouflage nets. Several people were released from work: furunculosis, abrasions on the palms, inguinal hernia, dropsy of the testicle. Most of the night I dug with everyone.

A signalman from the brigade headquarters arrived with some kind of order to the company commander. The only thing became known -

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Our brigade was attached to the 51st Army as a mobile reserve. Finally found the owner, so it will work. It became clear that earthworks were not without reason.

The signalman brought a large number of letters. They have been waiting for a long time. I received three letters: two from my mother and one from Leningrad from Aunt Faina. They wanted a speedy victory over the enemy.

Animation and exchange of information reigned. There were also sad faces. Manko received no letters. He left everyone. I found him in the cab of one of the cars - he was smoking. He, the commander of a car platoon, violated his own order not to smoke near the cars in the pit and broke our bet to stop smoking. It's a pity, of course, but it can be understood.

I went up to him, silently shook his hand at the elbow, and went about my business.

Tuesday, November 10, 1942 STRANGE ORDER.

After midnight, Lieutenant Colonel Ivanov arrived in the work area with another lieutenant colonel - a representative of the army, a company commander and a political instructor. They were interested in the amount of work done. The saddest thing awaited us after breakfast. They made an inspection of our transport vehicles, and the army representative ordered to remove the skins with which they insulated the cabs. Ours began to object. They left the personnel for the company commander's flight. After some time, the commander of the transport platoon, Manko, was called there, and Lieutenant Colonel Ivanov ordered him to rip off the skins and give the vehicles their original appearance. Manko froze when he heard about this, then came to his senses, tried to protest, but received an order to immediately carry out. Manko formed a platoon and announced to the drivers about the order of the brigade's deputy technical officer. People were silent, stood and did not move from their place. No one was in a hurry to execute the command "start to execute".

The foreman "Baby" spoke first. He stated that the order could not be followed. It's getting to winter, they've insulated the cabins, and suddenly everything is destroyed.

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Everyone was talking at once. Manko dismissed everyone and left the location of the platoon. I hoped that maybe everything would stay the same. But it didn't. He was summoned by the company commander and sternly asked why the order was not being carried out.

He returned to the location of the platoon, again lined up people and asked them to proceed with the execution of the order. He said that he sees no other way out. And the drivers with a pain in their hearts began to rip off the skins

and bare cabins, which until recently were hardly insulated. The night ahead is again sleepless - earthworks are coming. Manko did not come to rest. Got upset. Worked with a platoon on "putting the machines in order". As if a parade was coming, not military operations. They showed concern for the appearance of the machines to the detriment of the health and mood of the soldiers. How absurd all this is.

Wednesday, November 11, 1942 TANKS GO TO SCOUT.

All night talking about skins. With such difficulty they insulated the cars and destroyed everything. They took pity on the transport workers. And they could not calm down, they scolded Lieutenant Colonel Ivanov, the representative of the army. We would have traveled in open cars, then we would have made decisions. After breakfast I went to the transport platoon. They continued to pluck skins from some cabins. Fedya Byashirov, the initiator of the upholstery of cabins with skins, added the skins he had removed inside the cabin. At the back and to the ceiling, I attached it with wire, where with nails, and hung it on hooks from the sides. At

bosses can easily remove them.

- Not with a cue on the head, then on the kumpol - one outcome, - said Byashirov, - you can't outside, then they will be inside. Let's warm ourselves like this.

Following his example, the rest began to attach skins inside the cabin. Manko went to Mikhailovsky and told him about this trick. Together they came to the platoon. He looked at the work of drivers and allowed to insulate the cabs from the inside. All the same, there will be no open cabins, it will not blow through like that. The drivers had a night

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It was a very exhausting work on the construction of the storage, but all as one were engaged in the "ordering" of their cabins, and at night, they knew, they would go to work.

By dinner time, a group of our T-20 and T-60 tanks arrived at our disposal under the command of Captain Rustikov, commander of the 1st tank battalion. Together with them followed one car with ten submachine gunners. They were faced with a combat mission: to reconnoiter the path from the area of Lake Tsatsa in the direction of Semkin. Reconnoiter if Hill 62.0 is occupied by the enemy. We stopped at our location due to the fact that the turret of one tank was jamming, the electric trigger of another tank was failing.

Gunsmith Taras Kolesnik took up the repair of the cannon. The tank crew also helped him. Everything worked out for him. In terms of the repair of weapons, he did not take long this time either. The tower took longer. Almost all of our personnel went to earthworks, and the tankers left after midnight. Perhaps they were assigned to scout the path of our upcoming advance or other parts of the army. It was felt that something very significant was coming.

The Red Army soldier Kurbatov fell ill, and apparently very seriously. I couldn't figure it out right away. Long before dawn a messenger came for me, said that the Red Army soldier was dying and that he had been sent by the company officer on duty.

I examined the patient. He answered my questions reluctantly, listlessly. Sometimes he didn't answer at all. There was an increase in coma. Consciousness was darkened. He could not lift his head from the bed. He was very thirsty, and when he lifted his head, he cried out in pain and threw his head back with his chin raised. It looked like some kind of brain disease.

I reported to the commander about the patient and told him that this disease looked like meningitis and that if he was not given a lumbar puncture, the patient would die. He needs to be urgently taken to the medical platoon. He ordered to provide a car and send me before dawn.

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Thursday, November 12, 1942 STALINGRAD ON THE VERGE OF DISASTER.

It snowed all night long. It blew at times. People are dead. The work did not warm. Campfires were not allowed. With dawn, a boundless snow-whitened steppe opened up.

The commander allowed to go by one car. I allocated two Red Army soldiers with carbines for protection. The patient was laid on the straw in the back. Two hours later we reached Zergent. The patient was already unconscious. Didn't answer questions. His doctors Gasan-Zade and Lozhkin looked at him and offered me to take him in this car to the Volga. It was recommended to visit Khanata first. There was a medical battalion. If they do not accept him, then take him to Nikolskoye, where there was more than one hospital. The diagnosis is written in the referral: suspicion of meningitis. They made injections on the road, and I drove off. In Khanate the patient was not accepted, and we went to Nikolskoye. We drove up to the Therapeutic Field Mobile Hospital (TPCH). They refused admission. The patient was in critical condition, unconscious. The TIPG doctor on duty sent me to the evacuation hospital, the head office of which was located on the right bank of the Volga, near the crossing. There he handed over the patient and set off on the return journey. A lot of our troops were moving across the Volga in the direction of Khanat. On the way, they overtook military units, many of them stood along the road. On the same day, already late in the evening, they reached Zergent through Khanata. We decided to spend the night here and went to the medical platoon. They lay down quietly on the floor, since it was warm, and soon fell asleep. In the morning we learned that the brigade had received the task of guarding the headquarters of the 51st Army. The brigade headquarters, command and control company, motorized rifle machine-gun battalion and engineer-sapper company are leaving or have already left for a new area. The medical platoon went down mostly yesterday and is also due to leave today. Nobody knew anything about our technical support company. It must be that ours will have to march to a new area of deployment.

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Went to brigade headquarters. There was no headquarters there. The commander on duty said that our company was still in place, and we went to our own. When they arrived, they did not notice anything unusual. The personnel were on earthworks. The rest were doing the usual things - who than. We did not know that the brigade was moving to another place and that new things awaited us. The company commander left for the brigade headquarters the evening before and has not yet returned. From fragmentary conversations in the medical battalion, in the hospital, one could conclude that it was very difficult for Stalingrad. Fights were going on in the city for every house, every piece of land. It can be seen that the enemy in many places comes out to the Volga and overturns ours.

Friday, November 13, 1942 INTELLIGENCE RETURNED.

At dawn they picked me up. The detachment of captain Rustikov's tankers returned. They completed the task. We reconnoitered the route to the west of Lake Tsatsa. The path is not easy: where we passed quietly, where we were subjected to shelling. It was especially difficult in the region of height 62.0, where they came under heavy machine-gun and artillery fire, and a military assistant and one submachine gunner who were following in the car were also wounded. They called me to them. The military paramedic had a blind bullet wound in the region of the muscles of the back of the head. A bullet was felt through the skin. Somehow it ricocheted. He treated the wound and applied a fresh bandage. The submachine gunner had a tangential wound to his thigh. I fixed the bandage. They were fed, and they left in the direction of Zergent, although ours must be no longer there. It was rumored that they had scouted out the route we were to follow shortly.

At night, cars with ammunition and fuel arrived. They were placed in storage facilities prepared by us.

Saturday, November 14, 1942 REID BEHIND THE ENEMY.

It was still dark when the commander of the 1st tank battalion, captain Rustikov, arrived again with a group of two T-20 tanks, three T-60 tanks and an open car with a car.

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tomatoes. We refueled, got additional ammunition. Company commander Mikhailovsky called me to him. In the car he had, besides Kalmykov and Titov, Captain Rustikov.

- The group is going to combat reconnaissance. You will go with them. This is the order of the chief of staff of the brigade. Their military paramedic is wounded, as you know. Ventilate a little. Take you know what with you. Bandaging in the main," Mikhailovsky ordered.

- I'm listening. May I go?

- Departure immediately after breakfast. Order that they be fed before the others.

I went to get ready. There was little time left. He filled up the sanitary bag with dressings, took a cape, put on new warm footcloths. I understood that, among other things, I would have to freeze well. The foreman Nikolaev suggested putting on a padded jacket under the overcoat, but then the overcoat did not fasten. The GT pistol was with me. I took a gas mask, a duffel bag, where I stuffed a dry ration for two days, and other trifles. I also have a sanitary bag with me. That's all my equipment.

After breakfast we left. In the cockpit of the car sat the commander of a platoon of submachine gunners, next to me in the back of the head of communications of the battalion, Senior Lieutenant Misha Goloshevsky. First time I met him. The most noticeable thing he had was a tablet with maps, where he was supposed to enter the route of movement. He said that they should reconnoiter the route to the west of Lake Tsatsa in the direction of the settlement of Prishib. We will be on the road day and night and part of the next day. Tomorrow, by the end of the day, the results of reconnaissance should be reported to the headquarters of the 51st Army. It was snowing in small grains, it froze in the morning. The tanks went into the steppe, and our car followed them.

Everyone was wrapped in cloaks, pressed against each other, and it was bearable, although we were blown by a snowy wind and sandy dust raised by tanks. We walked northeast for several hours with short stops. Capi

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tan Rustikov got out of the tank, approached our car and Misha specified the route of movement, made notes on his maps, planned the next route and moved on.

Somewhere in the afternoon we stopped at some ravine and went down into it. The captain announced a big halt. Allowed me to eat. Ahead until the evening stops are not expected. We will move at high speeds.

They posted a sentry. They began to loosen up. They mastered the small shrubs around. The submachine gunners built several fires and warmed up canned food on the coals. I followed their example. We refueled the tanks from the barrel from our car, and again on the road. I was embarrassed by barrels of diesel fuel and boxes of ammunition at my feet Not a very pleasant neighborhood.

We went west and through small settlements. Usually one tank entered first. When he gave a sign that everything was calm, the whole group of us approached him. Misha drew everything on the map. They were walking through no man's land. And our troops were not here, and the enemy did not meet. We only covered no more than seventy kilometers according to the speedometer of our car. The sun shone, the wind died down.

Awakened by the sounds of gunfire, animation and noise in the car. Imperceptibly took a nap. They fired at us: on the way to the settlement from mortars. We turned into the steppe and went around it. Ours didn't fire. It was more than half a kilometer to the outskirts. It was the village of Prishib. This means that the enemy is already sitting here. Let's move on. The drowsiness vanished as if by hand. It's already a walk.

We almost bypassed the village and stopped behind the hills that hid us from the village. Captain Rustikov ordered to put two submachine gunners on the armor of the tanks. In addition to machine guns, they were given grenades and bottles with combustible mixture. In order to reconnoiter the strength of the enemy garrison in Prishib, I decided to walk along its main street at high speed. I ordered not to spare grenades, Molotov cocktails, cartridges. Make more noise. Rebuilt column. Behind our wheeled vehicle

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I put the tank in the rear. Misha and I put our grenades at our feet and a bottle of flammable liquid each. The column emerged from behind the mounds, advanced a little further, and turned in the direction of the village. We walked at high speed. We were enveloped in clouds of dust, stretching behind us in a long train. No shots were fired from the village, and ours were silent.

When they broke into the village, our machine guns started talking, shots were fired from cannons. Figures with machine guns rushed down the street, began to shoot at our tanks. Grenades exploded - both ours and the enemy's. Fires broke out. Tanks crushed cars and wagons along the street, and houses caught fire. At the exit from the village there were batteries of guns, mortars. Tanks ironed some of them, submachine gunners pelted them with grenades and bottles. It was not visible and the calculation of the guns. Or hid, or rested somewhere. We were not expected from the side from which we entered, and they were not ready to shoot at our tanks. Suddenly the car shook and pulled to the side. She began to wobble, slowed down, but continued to follow the tanks. The trailing tank turned its turret back and covered our retreat. A submachine gun fell down at his feet, but the car jumping over the potholes did not allow him to inspect.

We went further and further from the village into the steppe. Our car stopped. The lieutenant jumped out and shouted to us that the driver was wounded, asked to take him to the back. The machine gunner on the floor of the body was dead. They handed the driver into the car. The lieutenant got behind the wheel and began to catch up with the departed tanks. The driver's overcoat sleeve was wet with blood up to the wrist and there were small inlet and outlet openings in the shoulder area. With great difficulty, having removed his overcoat from him, on the move of the car he put a tight bandage on his shoulder over his tunic to stop the bleeding. Tanks were waiting for us. When we stopped, I re-examined the wounded man in the back of the car. He shifted the bandage over his bare shoulder. There was a bullet wound there. It also turned out to be a tangent

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naya wound in the chest. It can be seen that he was wounded by one bullet. He put a bandage on his chest. To do this, I had to undress him to the waist in the cold.

The submachine gunner was mortally wounded: a bullet pierced his chest and crushed his spine. As soon as I finished bandaging, submachine gunners from the tanks moved over to us. One was missing. Fell off the tank alive or wounded. Everyone was tied to the tower, but how this one fell down, the neighbor did not notice. The captain, followed by all the others, took off their hats. The command followed: "By cars!" Our column went to the southeast. Perhaps they took us for their own, and therefore allowed us to enter the village. It was some kind of Romanian part. Everyone in himself digested what had happened, scrolled through episode after episode in his memory.

The first minutes were silent. The sight of the wounded, the body of the dead and the loss of a submachine gunner from the tank acted depressingly. We started talking about what happened. They all spoke at once. Each tried to outshout the other. I remembered the details. The car tilted on one of the bumps, and the corpse of a dead comrade rolled along the bottom of the body. People imagined what could happen to each of them and what else could happen while they had passed ... The tension of the experienced battle with the enemy still needed to be relieved, but it did not work out, conversations were interrupted, but did not stop.

"I think we're tipping over," one said, "when the car jerked and it wobbled.

"I see it crashes into the house, but it turned around," said another.

- Like a spear struck in the left hand, and burned the side, - the wounded driver spoke, - the steering wheel was knocked out of his hands. Okay, the lieutenant picked it up. It's dark in my eyes, I don't see anything, and the lieutenant shouts: "Gas, brother, press!" I must have been stinging without a clue, and jumped out.

They shared their impressions in snatches. We walked in the direction of our location. No road, no settlements along the way. What directions did you follow? How in

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the song is sung: "Steppe and steppe all around ..." And so to the very horizon.

We drove out onto a country road. In the distance, half a kilometer away, a village appeared. Stopped. Captain Rustikov and Misha consulted the map. There should not have been any settlements along the laid route. Looks like they've gone off track. One T-60 tank was sent to the village to clarify the situation. Everyone got off their cars, doing their natural errands. I wanted to eat. We saw how our tank suddenly broke out near the village itself, then only heard an explosion. It all happened so unexpectedly that everyone was dumbfounded. The explosions of shells and mines that were heard nearby brought them out of their stupor. We ran to the cars. The tanks quickly dispersed. They began to shoot from cannons at the village in disorder, blindly. We retreated farther into the steppe, firing from small stops and on the move. Our car moved about four hundred meters and stopped. The tankers continued to shoot at the village and retreat.

We saw how our burning tank was surrounded by motorcyclists, but did not come close. Suddenly they saw flames and smoke shoot up above the tank, then they heard a deaf strong explosion. Ammunition exploded and the tank was blown to pieces. The tank commander, Lieutenant Gudnik, and the driver, Senior Sergeant Stelmakov, were killed. We all took off our hats. From the cannons of the tanks they fired a volley at the village and went after the commander's car. Because of the noise of the tank engines, we did not hear or see how the "frame" was going over us. We only noticed when she left. Maybe she was looking for us. Now send bombers. Did Captain Rustikov see the "frame"? How to tell him about it? The commander turned off the road, and the column went aside over bumps, between small hills. Twilight came on. From the place of the death of the tank left forty kilometers.

We turned into a small beam, and the commander said that we would spend the night here. We had a snack on frozen dry rations. Nothing was warmed up. Make fires more than once

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decided. sentries posted. We lay down on the bottom of the body, pressed against each other, covered ourselves with capes. Nearby lay the body of a dead comrade. It was snowing lightly, freezing. I don't slept.

Sunday, November 15, 1942 AMONG YOURSELF.

Chilled overnight. Even in the dark they rocked us, lifted us up. With the dawn we saw the "frame" again. Isn't he looking for us? We hid. But she couldn't miss us. After her departure, they left the gully and went south at high speeds. Machine-gun shots rang out above us, and then two "Messers" slipped by like a black shadow. They turned around and again came at us in front. The tanks spread out and went away from the center line. Machine gun shots sounded. There was another wounded in the soft tissues of the thigh in the car. We walked quickly. On the move, with difficulty, he bandaged the wounded man and laid him on the bottom of the body.

In the afternoon we arrived at the location of our company hungry and cold. Bandaged the second wounded again. Warmed up and had lunch. Having captured the dead and two wounded, the group left for Zergenta, where the 2nd tank battalion was still located. Everyone asked me about the hike that I saw. I said something. The excitement of the experience did not leave me. And suddenly I really wanted to sleep. And I went to the infirmary. But sleep did not take me. In memory ran like a kaleidoscope episodes.

I was walked in the Volga steppe and returned to my company. Might not come back. Bullet fool could find me. For the first time I felt that life could end at any moment. There is absolutely no need for extraordinary circumstances. Any random bullet or shrapnel. That's how my comrades pass away. And it could happen to me at any moment. Previously, this was not thought about. I realized how anxious my parents, brother and sisters were for me. My heart sank, tears flowed. Luckily I was alone and no one saw them. The tension of the experience must have subsided ... I slept until the next day.

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Whatever awaits us ahead, but I am among my own. They need me and I need them. We are all of the same destiny, and together it is easier to meet the coming day.

Monday, November 16, 1942 THE CALM BEFORE THE STORM.

The brigade headquarters, service units and a motorized rifle machine-gun battalion were located somewhere in the area where the headquarters of the 51st Army was located, commanded by Major General Trifonov. Part of the tank battalions remained in Zergent. A tank repair team was sent there from us. Received seven old T-40s and T-70s after repairs. Tanks arrived with crews. There is a large shortage in the brigade, we are replenishing with equipment so far poorly. But cars with ammunition and fuel arrive at full speed. It seems that more than the tank brigade needed. The excavated vaults are no longer enough. The night excavation work on storage equipment was stopped. Everyone is unloaded openly in a beam. After lunch, Gen and Sargsyan went to the first-aid post. They were interested in the details of intelligence, in which I participated. In their opinion, the path of possible movement of the brigade or the army as a whole was reconnoitered. There was no doubt that serious military operations were coming. In Stalingrad the position of our troops is critical. Sargsyan said that the Germans were already shooting down our barges on the Volga near the city with machine guns and machine guns, that the city was mainly occupied by the Germans, and ours were holding its individual islands, and if ours did not throw huge forces, then a catastrophe was inevitable. Gen noticed that, apparently, the Germans were also exhausted, since they could not take the city, and it was up to the reserves. The one who pulls them up faster and throws them into battle wins.

I still did not come to my senses after this raid behind enemy lines, and my comrades tried to calm me down and cheer me up.

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Tuesday, November 17, 1942 WE GET REPLENISHMENTS.

Naumov arrived with a batch of wheeled vehicles: GAZ-51, ZIS-5. The personnel undertook their service. Manko and Naumov were busy with cars, I saw them only near the kitchens during meals. I raised the issue with Sergeant Major Nikolaev about changing linen for personnel. I realized that it would not be possible to wash people, because most of the repairmen were in Zergent, and the drivers were on flights, and there were no conditions. The foreman said that he had a clean set of linen and would make a change when it became officially known that we would go into business, as he put it. And he added that at all times, including the royal ones, they gave out clean linen before the battle, which he would do too. Perhaps he thought correctly, but will he have time?

Wednesday, November 18, 1942 ON THE EVE OF IMPORTANT EVENTS.

In the morning a messenger arrived from the headquarters of the brigade, and the commander, political officer, Sargsyan and foreman Nikolaev urgently left with him. Such a representative group had not been called before, and we discussed this fact and decided that important events were coming. And they weren't wrong. After dinner, the commander and political officer arrived, called the platoon and squad commanders and said that the brigade was leaving for a new concentration area and that military operations were ahead of us. Our company must urgently dive in, send part of the vehicles to load the brigade's warehouses, send the car to the disposal of foreman Nikolaev, who receives food, equipment, and winter clothes for the company. Sargsyan forms a technical support group for tank battalions and receives spare parts for repairs. A vehicle was also placed at his disposal - a tank-repair battalion, which should be sent to him together with the repairmen, the senior of which is Sergeant Korol. We've all been ordered to start loading.

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property on cars and wait for the command to march. And it started. Began to load property on cars. Necessary and not-necessary. There were few cars left, and everything did not fit. translated,



sorted what to take, what to leave. As always, I didn't have a specific place. Was hoping to get somewhere.

Late at night somehow loaded. And I threw the medical equipment into one of the trucks. Sargsyan and foreman Nikolaev arrived. Soon an order was received to get additional winter uniforms and everyone to get clean linen, footcloths, put them on and turn in the dirty ones. They began to receive linen, to change clothes in cold sheds, many were never replaced, because they were busy. By the way they put on clean linen, it was said that this was a sign of upcoming hostilities. They drove until the morning. From minute to minute they were waiting for the command to march. How will the next day meet us?

## Chapter Six

COUNTEROFFENSIVE (November 19 - December 31, 1942)

Four, November 19, 1942 THE OFFENSIVE HAS STARTED!

All night long, in tense expectation, they sat in overloaded cars, some on top of the load or between it, some in flying cars. We were enveloped in thick fog. Damp cold air soaked through clothes. They froze terribly on side cars covered with tarpaulin and even worse - on open cars. Under the tarpaulin and capes, the body did not warm up, it became stiff. Fires were not allowed. From time to time they ran around the cars, played "guess who?" - put one of the palms through the armpit to the back and waited for a punch from one of the playing people on it. At the same time, they closed their eyes with the other hand. Those participating in the game put up a fist with a thumb extended. If you guess who struck, he would stand in a circle. From the blow, it happened that it was dark in the eyes, all the insides were shaken and warmth spread over the body.

Almost everyone was on their feet by dawn. They were waiting for breakfast, an opportunity to warm up, waiting for news. The command for the march never arrived. The unknown was oppressive. Something should happen or has already happened, but it didn't reach our wilderness. It was not for nothing that we and all our belongings were loaded onto trucks. No wonder they brought so much ammunition and fuel the day before. In the evening, a commander from the brigade headquarters arrived and reported that the troops of the Southwestern and Don Fronts north and northwest of Stalingrad had launched an offensive against the enemy to the width of these two fronts and that they were waiting for orders from the troops of the Stalingrad Front and our 51st Army.

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And we, who are its members, will also speak. This news shook the people. There was revival all around. Apathy subsided. Clarity is always better than obscurity. Finally, let's go! Lots of talk and guesswork. The kitchen smokes, hot food is given out, life goes on.

The main forces of the 51st Army are located in the area between the Tsatsa and Barmantsak rivers. We will have to arrive there too, or they will indicate another route. The life of the hermits is over. We're coming out of the underground!

Friday, November 20, 1942 FRUIT IN OUR HANDS!

And the second night passed on loaded cars. Buried under the tarpaulin in a cloak. The cold did not let me sleep. Legs stiffened. Pain in the lower back from lying still in an uncomfortable position forced me to get out from under the tarpaulin. Wet snow was falling. We had breakfast and at dawn we set out in a column in the direction of Zergent. The main forces of the 51st Army left the inter-lake area for Plodovitoe. Our tank brigade also participates in its composition. By evening we arrived and settled down on the outskirts of the village. Our troops only today captured this settlement, and the destruction shows that the fighting here was strong. It was defended by Romanian troops, whose corpses had not yet been removed. There was a lot of broken military equipment lying around. Our brigade was not found here. Its units advanced along with other units and formations of the 51st Army in the direction of Abganerovo, where we also went.

Saturday, November 21, 1942 DOCTOR LODZHKINA DEPARTURES FROM THE FRONT.

The fighting continued all night, the echoes of the battle did not stop for a minute. I learned that the medical platoon and part of the brigade's service units were located on the southern outskirts of the village of Plodovitoe.

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I finally found our medical platoon. Only one tent was set up - a reception and evacuation tent. Dressings were done in one of the houses. Cars stood near them, loaded with medical equipment, waiting for the command to march. The head of the pharmacy, Shepshelev, was not there. Dr. Lozhkina shared with me the dressing material from the stock of the dressing room. Filled them with part of the duffel bag. Met Maya. Like Zoya, she was tired, drooping - all night, like the previous ones, she did not sleep, treating the wounded. And under threat, with difficulty, they handed them over to one of the medical battalions. She was upset about something.

- Do you feel bad?

- Everything is fine, don't worry. Zoya is leaving. I found out yesterday and was very upset. Got used to it.

- Where will he go?

— Home. From the war and all of us.

- Like this?

- Why so stupid? She is pregnant, three months. According to the law, a woman in such a state is supposed to be dismissed from the active army.

"I didn't think about it..." I muttered.

"There is nothing for you to think about, since there is no danger of you becoming pregnant.

— Are you laughing?

- What's the laugh? As it is.

- It could leave the war.

- If! So far there is no reason.

— But they could be.

"I couldn't go for it, that is, I could, but a child needs a father. Legitimate father, and for his mother - husband. Also legal.

\_And I? |

He looked at her and remained silent. I realized that I would not mind at all if she left the war with my child. I wanted to tell her this, but didn't dare.

"So what are you?"

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"I could, probably, could help you and would really like to help in this," he mumbled and added uncertainly: "Become the father of your child."

It wasn't just my pitiful babble, my uncertainty, or my clumsy posture that was the reason, but she suddenly burst into such loud laughter that people began to look back at us. She could not stop for a long time - laughter became hysterical. Zoya came up, they became even more

Wounded Red Army soldiers and commanders in bandages were paying attention to us, but the laughter did not stop, and everyone around began to smile.

- What are you laughing at? Tell me, and I will laugh with you," Zoya turned to Maya.

Don Quixote has been found. Everyone wants to help me," and added seriously: "I don't know whether to take offense at you or not, but you, my friend, are becoming bad.

I wanted the best...

- Let's not fight. I think you were joking, rather rudely joking. He wanted to appear very mature, or out of his kindness he decided to do me a favor, which, perhaps, is closer to the truth. Let's forget.

"I don't want to be anyone. You are dear to me, and I am ready to help you in everything and always. In any question and even in this. You smile, but I'm serious. Know about it. And you shouldn't laugh at me. Although laugh, if only not to cry. I have to go. See you!

Sunday, November 22, 1942 OURS ARE SUCCESSFULLY ADVANCING.

There was a major offensive by our troops northwest of Stalingrad and here in the southwest. Something unprecedented, grandiose for our troops was coming. Germans, Romanians retreated. Ours advanced in large forces over a large area. Has not the expulsion of the enemy from our territory finally begun? Good time! Our troops have captured Abganerovo and are advancing on Aksai.

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The enemy threw military equipment and fled in a panic. In front of our brigade are mainly Romanian troops. For the first time in the war, I saw columns of prisoners of war - Romanian soldiers and officers, who were driven east by our auto-matches. Sorry sight. Overgrown, frozen warriors, wrapped over their overcoats with blankets, raincoats, with towels around their necks and on their heads. Who called them here, what did they count on?

We spent the night on the street, warming ourselves by the fires, not observing the blackout. We tried to get into the surviving houses, but they were packed with other units and we were not allowed to enter.

Only talk about the successful offensive of our troops. Passed by all the new parts. Our aviation is in the air. Lots of trophies. Hello, great! Finally on-chalos!

"Let's go to Sargsyan's, let's get warm," Gen called me.

- There is a lot of people in his bat and smoking. Better on the street.

- Just woke up. Its inhabitants are at work. Tried to come in.

We went into the flight room to Sargsyan. An iron stove was heated in the corner. It was hot. I sat without a tunic. They sat down, unbuttoned their greatcoats, took off their hats.

— It is necessary to note the successful offensive of our troops. What do you think?

"Is there anything to note?" Gen asked.

- We'll find it. Since the doctor does not invite me to his place, I decided to invite him to his place.

He took out a can of canned food, put aluminum mugs. Poured some liquid.

"Won't you poison us at such a solemn moment?"

— I guarantee that everything will be fine, I have already taken a sample.

He cut bread right on the table, spread three pieces of stewed meat and said:

— For a successful start and an even better continuation. I mean a successful attack. Maybe this will be

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the beginning of the expulsion of the enemy from the Caucasus, yours, Sasha, Ukraine, your Belarus, - he turned to me.

- For a successful attack! we supported.

Sargsyan noticed that a medical platoon was here in Plodovit. Did I check on my handsome doctor, he asked.

- I was yesterday, saw each other, quarreled.

- What? You need to be friends, you need to love each other, but he quarreled.

I told them that Zoya would go to the rear and for what reason and what Maye said that I could help her in this sense.

"Well done, doctor, he will go far," Gen remarked.

- Vulgar! How could he offer this to a woman without being in love with her.

"I don't know if I love her, but I would help her in everything. If I had asked or hinted, I would have married her.

"A woman does not ask for this. A worthy and self-respecting woman. And she is a worthy woman!

- I agree, and I respect her very much, but she seems to have just a comradely attitude towards me.

- Do not say. She once bandaged my finger and, having learned that I was from the technical support company, she became very interested in you and conveyed such warm greetings. It was more interest than a comrade. I know!

And added:

"Now you offended her. You have to apologize. It is difficult for a woman in our conditions. Everyone looks at her as an object of pleasure. And there are many of them around, at every turn. She needs a different attitude: protection, care, devotion. Can love this. And so you, like everyone else, are a dog.

"I can tell you this. Maximov, the head of the political department, sought her. Immediately very insistent. She resisted, told him that she would not go to intimacy, that she had a fiancé, whom she promised and would wait. When I found out about this, I invited her to declare that she was my wife,

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that is, he offered her to enter into a fictitious marriage, even offered to register, and Maksimov would have left her alone. She is grateful to me, but said that she would fight on her own. He began to treat her very gently, respectfully, and expects her to change her mind. Here is her position. |

Yes, the situation. If then you turned out to be a gentleman with a capital letter, now you committed meanness. She won't forgive you.

— You're being dramatic, Sargsyan. Nothing terrible happened," [en.

"Oh, you don't understand the subtleties of the soul. [They became rude soldiers. God bless you, Doctor. She is a good woman. Let's drink some more. For women, our wives, mothers, sisters. Courage to them and stamina and wait for their own!

We drank one more and I hurried to leave. I had to take a sample from dinner.

I sent under the moon in the back of a truck, together with Nikolai Manko, over the property. They took off their boots and overcoats, covered themselves with blankets, capes, somehow got warm and slept well this time.

Monday, November 23, 1942 AKSAI.

After breakfast, we set out in the direction of Abganerovo and even further - to the brigade combat area. I really wanted to see Maya, to apologize. We just finished loading the wounded onto the ambulance. Prepare to evacuate them. Gasan-Zade, Maya, Shepshelev were standing near the car. He greeted everyone, went up to Maya and said to her:

"I need you for a minute, can I?"

She looked straight at me and shrugged. Stepped aside a bit. Everyone looked at me, looked at each other. I felt awkward.

- What did you want?

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- To apologize. Maya, I am very ashamed that I spoke so clumsily or vulgarly last time. Excuse me, please.

- Forget it. I was very sad to hear that from you. I want to believe that in your heart you are not like that. We believe that there were no shadow sides between us.

- Maya, you are very dear to me, I did not want to offend you, believe me. Happy meeting.

I walked away.

The company commander announced that our place of deployment in the near future was Aksai, where repair shops were to be set up. The path lies through Abganerovo.

Far after noon, they arrived at the place. There were many of our troops there, which surprised and delighted. So, there is someone to fight. Single buildings and houses were still burning. Wrecked cars, guns, tanks were lying around. Everything felt like a battle had been going on here recently. We stopped at one of the outskirts, where the buildings of the former MTS stood. It was there that the Germans equipped workshops for the repair of military equipment. There was a welding machine, locksmith machines, racks with a vice, tools. Everything you need for renovations. Our sappers guarded the workshops.

We settled in a new place. In the workshops, work was already underway to repair tanks and wheeled vehicles. All personnel of the company received felt boots. New, hard, grey. Very handy - we won't be so cold. So, we moved in the brigade's wagon train to the places of hostilities, and now we have set up workshops in the rear to repair equipment.

Tuesday, November 24, 1942 THE ENEMY IN THE POT. HOORAY!

I slept in the warmth, in the house, together with Nikolai Manko and Kostya Naumov. The three got together again. In the evening they heated the stove and settled down on the floor. They put down a tarpaulin and blankets. Covered with overcoats, capes. We were awakened by random shots of machine guns, carbines, rifles, shouts of "Hurrah!". The foreman "Baby" came running

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and joyfully reported that the troops of our Stalingrad Front had joined yesterday with the troops of the Don and Southwestern Fronts advancing north of Stalingrad, and that in this way they surrounded the entire Stalingrad group of Germans.

"They set up a cauldron for the enemy, you understand, surrounded and destroyed it. It happened yesterday! They'll be ground into powder... Here's the deal!

We jumped up, dressed quickly and ran to the workshops. Many of us have already gathered there and discussed this event. When exactly this happened, to what extent, no one knew. We went to the commander and political officer, but they didn't know anything either. We knew that a major offensive against our troops was underway and that we, our tank brigade, were participating in this long-awaited event. But why are we moving south when Stalingrad is to the north of us?

Lieutenant Colonel Ivanov arrived. They built a company. The lieutenant colonel said that yesterday, November 23, 1942, at 4 pm, the troops of the South-Western Front and our Stalingrad front, as a result of four days of fighting, united in the area of the Sovetsky farm and surrounded a large grouping of enemy troops consisting of the 6th field and 4th tank German armies, 3rd, 4th Romanian armies, 8th Italian army and continue to smash them.

Shouts of "Hurrah!" and applause drowned out the last words of Lieutenant Colonel Ivanov.

— Comrades! I congratulate you on a brilliant victory," continued Ivanov, "our 254th tank brigade with other units and formations of the 51st Army is advancing on the outer front of the encirclement of the enemy and pushing him in the direction of Kotelnikov, away from his encircled grouping in Stalingrad. Major General Kolomiets, Deputy Commander of the 51st Army, ordered our brigade to cut off the enemy's retreat along the roads leading to Sadovoye, Ketchenery, and Shebenery. There are mainly Romanian troops there, and our brigade is now fighting on the indicated lines. Your task, comrades, is to repair

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repair the tanks that you have in your workshop as quickly as possible, and create a technical support group that will go with me and follow the brigade's battle formations and repair damaged equipment. Get to work, comrades! Death to the German and Romanian invaders!

- Death! Death! Death! - answered the discordant formation of the company.

Glory to our Red Army! Glory to the leader and commander - the great Stalin, leading us to victory!

- Glory! Glory! Glory! Hurray...ah...ah! - spread far and wide.

The personnel dispersed to the workshops and set to work. People rejoiced. Neither the cold, nor the monotonous and meager food could affect the selfless work of people. Such a victory! Finally, perhaps, there will be a turning point in the war.

We were preparing a flying car and an onboard vehicle for the technical support group. It was headed, as always, by the military technician Voropaev. It included foreman Kruglyakov, Sergeant Korol, Red Army soldiers Nagiba, Kovtun and others. I completed Letuchka's first-aid kit with bandages, cotton wool, on a stand of iodine. We received dry rations for 5 days and departed, led by Lieutenant Colonel Ivanov. They knew from experience that they had a very difficult combat mission ahead of them. This time they didn't take me.

Wednesday, November 25, 1942 THE BRIGADE IS OPERATING ON THE OUTSIDE FRONT OF THE ENVIRONMENT OF THE ENEMY.

He moved all his medical property to the house where he stayed for the night. He assigned one room to the medical center. Finally, it became possible to provide assistance in relatively convenient conditions.

From the drivers who arrived for ammunition, we learned that our troops had captured the settlements of Zhutov-[] and Zhugov-2. In cooperation with other units, our brigade is fighting for Umantsevo.

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The motorized rifle machine-gun battalion broke through far to the southeast, occupied the settlements of Tyagi, Obilnoye, Bolenov, cutting off the retreat of the Romanian units. The battalion suffered heavy losses in killed and wounded. Died in battle and his commander Dudin. Military paramedic Modzelevsky, in an ambulance and onboard, accompanied the wounded to Plodovitoe. The brigade as a whole suffers heavy losses. There are fewer and fewer tanks left.

Thursday, November 26, 1942 REINFORCEMENT DURING THE BATTLE.

In the morning the medical platoon stopped in Aksai. We did not make it to Zhutov-1, where we should turn around completely and receive the wounded. It is not clear why they stayed away from the combat units of the brigade for so long. While the cars were refueling, I managed to see my colleagues. I asked Shepshelev for a set of dressings.

Four T-40s and two T-70s arrived with crews to replenish the brigade. The vehicles were refueled, something was replaced, repaired, and in the evening they left with a representative of the brigade.  
South

The second tank battalion was late with reaching the starting line and did not take part in the attack on the settlement of Obilnoye. The motorized rifle machine-gun battalion advanced without tank support, and the brigade as a whole suffered heavy losses in this battle. The commander of the 2nd tank battalion, senior lieutenant Khodakov, was removed from command of the battalion by the brigade commander, Major Sadovsky.

Sergeant Korol arrived for tank parts. He spoke about the combat operations of the brigade. It is thrown from one locality to another. There are fewer and fewer tanks and personnel left in the brigade. The incoming replenishment during the battles does not cover the losses. The Romanians again occupied Umantsevo, they had to go around it on the way here.

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Friday, November 27, 1942 UMANTSEVO.

The Romanians were driven out of Umantsev, and the units of the brigade concentrated in this settlement. The outer front of the encircled enemy grouping is moving further and further away in our area, where our troops continue to destroy it. The enemy is driven out and destroyed on the outer front of the encirclement and in the west. In the battles for Umantsevo, the main burden fell on the 1st tank battalion. He suffered significant losses.

Repair work in the workshops was in full swing. And the cold is no problem. The mood of the people is good. There are not enough spare parts for the repair of military equipment. The food got better. There were pasta. More often they began to bring white bread. Almost everyone had trophy preserves and biscuits.

Saturday, November 28, 1942 THE BRIGADE IS THAT.

The 254th Tank Brigade was transferred to the mobile reserve of the commander of the 51st Army. Centered in Umantsevo. There is also a medical platoon. The brigade was fading away, its combat capabilities were declining: tanks and other types of military equipment were breaking down, personnel were dying. Top-ups

until it was. All damaged equipment was concentrated in Aksai. Their renovation was in full swing. Light masking was not respected. Electric welding worked day and night. All warehouses of the brigade are located in Aksai.

Today a group of large German aircraft flew over us, accompanied by fighters. These transport vehicles were going with cargoes to their encircled troops. Will they be allowed to reach Stalingrad? They were not shot at in our area, no one attacked them. The company commander went to Umantsevo almost every day. I asked him to take me today - he refused. I wanted to visit the medical platoon, get something.

Tonight, in the evening, they dragged a German passenger car in tow on an air cooling Opel

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captain". Tried to start, failed. It looks unprepossessing, for four people. The company commander wants to adapt it for himself. I decided to call the senior technician Lieutenant Vanin - the "professor" of the automaker and instruct him to revive the car.

Sunday, November 29, 1942 RESERVES.

The brigade guards the headquarters of the 51st Army, puts itself in order after the battles, sometimes conducts reconnaissance in groups on the instructions of the army command.

We were between three enemy armies: German, Romanian and Italian. In the north, our troops fought with the encircled German group, in the south they fought with the Romanian troops, in the west - with both and with the Italians. And everywhere the fighting so far went well. It was already felt that the intensity of hostilities was somewhat subsiding, although their sharpness and drama would increase. Our troops have suffered heavy losses and are in dire need of reinforcements. This was felt in our team as well. And the enemy is exhausted. The last reserves are thrown into battle, and the offensive capacity is drying up. He needs fresh strength to make a breakthrough, and we really need it to build on the success. Who will win? It's about reserves.

Monday, November 30, 1942 PRE-WINTER DAY.

Last day of November. Real winter all around. Slight frost up to five degrees. Snowball. The sun shines brightly. There is almost no wind, and snowflakes, each in its own pattern, fall on the ground, objects, and clothes. I counted about a dozen snowflakes of various shapes on the sleeve of my overcoat. I never thought there were so many different ones.

We received new underwear, ordinary and warm, for personnel with strings instead of buttons. He suggested to the commander to wash the people according to the old tested model with

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kitchen help, but he refused. He only allowed me to change the linen.

We received bread in bricks. True, stale and cold, but bread, not crackers. The choice of cereals was small: millet, barley and peas. Dried potatoes, onions, carrots. Meat and fish canned food. Borsch dressing in glass jars and a large barrel of very salty rusty herring. They gave her out for dinner with breadcrumbs and porridge. Began to go badly the last days. Maybe it would be better with bread. So far, everyone continued to give out the prescribed norm. Cooked hot food three times a day. The people who worked in the cold had enough food in terms of volume and, probably, in terms of calories. The latter was not determined. There was no need to argue about the taste, but the people did not starve. Some bogatyr were given fuller cauldrons. They also used trophies.

Tuesday, December 1, 1942 A RED ARMY UNDER A TANK.



It was a very difficult day for the whole company, and especially for me. I think that in all the past four months of my stay at the front, I have not had to worry so much about the life of a comrade. The tank overturned, and the manhole cover pressed the leg of the repairman Kukhlenko to the frozen ground. It didn't take long to get it out. This happened shortly after breakfast, and it was taken out well after noon. I couldn't get back to normal. Everything is not out of my head this case.

Wednesday, December 2, 1942 DID YOU DO EVERYTHING YOU CAN?

A day has passed, and I can not recover from what happened. I feel guilty - I did not show professional determination, and the victim died. A lot of people died around me before my eyes. Already seemed to get used to it. I saw a lot of pain and suffering. War and its products - death, torment, suffering - are inevitable. But each

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meeting with a new death in front of my eyes or hands is perceived differently depending on the circumstances, on the situation and situation in which the victim is, and most importantly, on how much your participation can eliminate the onset of death, save life. I knew what would have saved his life, but no one could have done it.

In this case, I reproached myself for the fact that it was impossible to amputate his foot under the tank. Then a severe state of shock would not have set in, and he probably would not have died, although he would have remained a cripple. But how to cut off a part of a living person's leg in front of people in such conditions without anesthesia on the frozen ground under the tank? It is practically impossible. And at the same time I understand that only this would save his life. They fumbled for a long time until they pulled him out from under the tank. After many hours, he was taken to a surgical field mobile hospital. In addition, there was also a multiple fracture of the pelvic bones with damage to the bladder.

Thursday, December 3, 1943 HOW IT HAPPENED.

Every feeling fades with time. Yesterday I didn't want to see anyone. I spent most of the day in the infirmary.

- Why can't you see, doctor, are you ill? Sargsyan asked at the meeting.

- No, healthy. Everything is fine.

- They say that you are worried about the death of Kukhlenko. Your fault is not there. Everything happens in a war.

"He had to have his leg amputated under the tank. Cut off the foot, putting a tourniquet above it, and he would have remained alive. And so the shock developed, from which he, in fact, died.

"I imagine it's not so easy to cut off a leg. This can only be done in an operating room, but here under a tank ... As I understand it, a good surgeon can do it, and even then not under a tank and in such a cold. I don't know who could do it.

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- This is what tormented me. He firmly knew that it was impossible for him to lie in such a state in the cold for so long, but he could not help him. This still depresses me to this day.

"Don't be executed, it's not your fault.

Friday, December 4, 1942 LETTERS WERE RECEIVED.

The intensity of hostilities in our sector was somewhat fading away. Needed to be replenished. The brigade had seven tanks on the move. Many of the personnel in combat units

Broke down. We were, as it were, in a triple rear: from the southern and western retreating enemy groups and the northern encircled.

We received newspapers and, finally, letters - a large number of letters. It was already a holiday. I received three letters: one from Leningrad from Aunt Faina and two from my mother from the Urals. It is very difficult for the inhabitants of Leningrad. People are dying of hunger and cold. Weaken, stop moving and die before the eyes of the same doomed. Scary! And a mother with four children is difficult. Mother, sister and brother work as laborers at a copper smelter, one sister is enrolled in a vocational school, and the youngest is in a kindergarten. Issued overalls to seniors. Products are received on cards. They live starving and cold, but alive, supported by the hope of victory, meeting and returning home to Belarus. The letters were a big event for us. Those who received joyful letters somehow did not dare to express special delight, for many did not receive them at all.

Saturday, December 5, 1942 IT IS QUIET IN AKSAY.

Fewer and fewer damaged vehicles arrived. The brigade conducted continuous reconnaissance in small groups in the direction of Kotelnikovo, Kurmoyarsky, Gremyachy. In this direction, the advance of our troops stopped. The enemy stubbornly resisted and often went over to counterattacks.

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It's calm in Aksay. The personnel repaired military equipment, mainly their own, company equipment. Wheeled vehicles were on the move all the time: they carried ammunition, gasoline, food. Short rest, and again in flight. The wounded were being transported past us in ambulances and passing trucks towards the village of Plodovitoe. The fighting continued, fresh forces were needed for decisive contractions.

Sunday, December 6, 1942 FEW PARTS.

Manko is upset that many wheeled vehicles are idle with him. There are no spare parts. They dismantled one car, wrote it off, or the war wrote it off, but there wasn't enough for all the holes. The drivers are different, many are inexperienced, they operate the transport ineptly. Now the radiators are defrosted, then the gearbox is flying, then the rear axle is knocking. Winter complicates the operation of machinery and puts forward a number of problems that are not so easy to solve in our conditions. And yet they sought to ensure that the machines were on the move and coped with their tasks.

Monday, December 7, 1942 WHAT WILL IT BE AFTER THE WAR?

The company commander and his entourage continue to be trained separately. More canned food is spent on them, fresh potatoes, often onions, fresh vegetables. There was a bag of rice, but it was used only for the commander and his entourage. At first, I began to delve into and interfere in the organization of food, but it turned out sideways for me.

In this situation, the cooks also became impudent, feeling support and seeing that they do not support me, they keep themselves in the kitchen, as in their personal household. Under the brand name of the commander and his inner circle, they cook separately for themselves, the storekeeper, the clerk, the commander of the economic platoon. Moonshine is a frequent guest of business executives.

Kostya, his turn, brought barley porridge in vegetable oil and herring, salty and rusty. I didn't want to eat it.

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"They didn't give me a fried potato, the cattle are roasting a whole baking sheet. For the commander and superiors, they say, but who am I to them, not the authorities? And in general, what kind of leadership can there be for the stomachs? They are all the same for people, and they have the same need," Kostya was indignant.

- It turns out that that yak is his, unequal stomachs for everyone.

This can't go on like this, there must be an end to this.

- Who will put an end to it? The commander is the sole proprietor, and everything depends on him. They will order and they will do it. What, brigade commander, do you think is better? He does not offend himself as long as he has power. And he got a woman, and his stomach does not refuse. They bring him the very best. The commander is the master! This is how life works, - Manko objected, - whoever has power, that is pan.

"I am not a party member. Coastal tramp. This is how I was considered, and this is how I am by nature. But I also understand justice. Party members wrote and talked about communism, when everyone will be equal. And then life will be according to the slogan: "From each according to his ability, to each according to his need." But this will never happen as long as there are Mikhailovskys, who arrange communism only for themselves, and as long as there are such unscrupulous people as our doctor, who does not control such people and does not stop their actions, but must do it according to his position.

- He started, that one like him, to interfere, then he, as you know, to the nail. What is left for him? Manko protected me.

Gen came to us on some issue to Manko.

- What are you arguing about, servants?

Kostya expressed his attitude towards Mikhailovsky and his entourage.

- Who wants a rusty herring for dinner, and who wants fried potatoes with pork stew. And together we go to communism, motherfucking like that. Where else and when will it be as needed in accordance with their slogan, and they are already adjusting to it.

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We are still living according to the principle of socialism: from each according to his ability, to each according to his work. Whoever earns more, get more.

The commander and the authorities in general bear a great responsibility and, therefore, earn more subordinates, so they should fall more, - Gen answered Kostya and all of us.

- But the ration is the same for everyone, both for the commander and for the Red Army soldier. The salaries are higher for a higher rank, let him receive them and buy them for his hard-earned money, but the grams for all stomachs are the same, and there is nothing to take them from others for yourself. This is, to put it mildly, robbery. And he is not encouraged anywhere by law. Here's what I'll tell you. And that's what you think, Sasha, and don't lie," I intervened and added: "Am I supposed to control the state of nutrition in my position, and the rest will wait in the bushes?"

— What do you propose? Gen asked me.

- Justice must be!

- Who will guide her?

- All. Each and all together.

"You know," Manko intervened, "that one is like him, the doctor is right. I and everyone else should. So the doctor tried one and paid the price. Nobody supported you. Everyone was afraid for themselves.

- Here you are crying into the sleeve of your vest, as they say, but why didn't you intervene? Gene scolded him.

- What can I do?

- I would go to the political officer.
- He is the same bitch, he collects leftovers from the commander's table and is pleased.
- Go to the head of the political department, to the brigade commander together with the doctor.
- It wouldn't do anything. Another rebellion will be attributed, undermining the authority of the commander and the tribunal may be. Not the time. Be patient and live until the end of the war, if you manage to survive, and then we'll see. The people will not let themselves be offended. We will defeat external enemies and deal with internal ones.

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"And it might not be easier on the inside. You see the outside, but the inside will disguise itself behind orders, slogans, and try to knock it off. It won't be that easy.

"We must end the war, and then we will see.

- This is closer to the truth, it is necessary to win the war. This is the main thing, the rest is dregs.
- Nikolay, I need a car, that's what I came for. Kalmykov gave an invoice for spare parts. Select Byashirov for me. I'll bring something with him," Gen finished the conversation.

This concludes our discussion.

The conversation about justice has remained a conversation for now. Its decision will take place after the end of the war.

Tuesday, December 8, 1942 LEFT WITHOUT A COMMISSIONER.

Catarrhal diseases appeared: sore throats, catarrhs of the upper respiratory tract. Frost weakened, thaws. Strong winds, sleet, slush underfoot - contribute to colds. In the workshop they work in overalls. The temperature is near zero, drafts. The people are not the first youth, especially the repairmen. Drivers catch colds on flights. Felt boots get wet in slush, and tarpaulin boots get wet, despite the grease and tar with which they are smeared. There is nowhere to dry them.

How is our commissioner? Kostya turned to me.

"I think everything should end well. They took me straight to the operating table.

- Reclaimed. You will envy. Everyone is lucky...
- Don't scold him. Man, I remarked.
- That one like him, in his place was not a man. And the place turned out to be without a person.
- But he will take his place later, that you will not rise. He will not be equal to us. And the rest will not care, like Mikhailovsky.

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"Nothing will change in Taiga. How they hunted the beast, so it will remain. I will beat sables and squirrels, and there will be enough for life, and there is a lot of beauty for the soul. And without envy. I invite you to the taiga after the war.

Look, he's already finished the war...

What happened to our commissioner? Late the night before, some were already dozing and some were sleeping, a noise was heard, and Titov was carried in his arms to the first-aid post. He screamed and writhed in pain so

At first I thought he was shot in the stomach. Curled up and rolled on the floor. Couldn't really get anything from him. All the stomach, said, hurts, stomach, stomach and no more words.

From the Red Army soldiers who brought him, I learned that he was going with the guard to check the guards. Suddenly he grabbed his stomach, fell and began to roll from pain. We thought it was some kind of stray bullet. He said that he was stabbed inside with a knife. I tried to look at the stomach, but he could not unbend. Finally managed to put him on his back. The abdomen was pulled in, tense, hard as a board, especially in the upper part. Small drops of cold sweat on the face, pallor, frequent superficial pulse. Acute abdomen - a disaster in the abdominal cavity! There could be acute appendicitis or perforation of a gastric or duodenal ulcer. More for the last one. He needed urgent surgical treatment.

He asked Manko to prepare a car for evacuation to the hospital, and he himself went to report to the company commander about the need to urgently take him to the operation in Plodovito. On a stretcher, I put him on top of a tarpaulin on the floor of a truck body, covered him with blankets, and immediately drove off. He was moaning and screaming all the time. We walked quietly and two hours later at night we arrived at the medical battalion, and there we were redirected to a surgical field mobile hospital, where they immediately took him to the operating table. They did not wait for the results, they returned to their place in Aksai. We were left without a commissioner, although we were without him.

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Wednesday, December 9, 1942 EVENING OF MUSIC AND SONG.

After dinner, a general impromptu concert was held by our forces. Fedya Byashirov got hold of an accordion somewhere. Sometimes he chirped in the platoon, but very clumsily. Some Tatar melodies also came out, and, as I understood, he played weakly. Today, after dinner, the harmonica came to Mezentshev, the clerk of the economic platoon. We already knew about his musical abilities. He was asked to play. And it could have been done in the workshop among the repaired tanks and wheeled vehicles. He played selflessly and well. Soon almost the entire personnel of the company gathered. Some connected their abilities, and it turned out to be an impromptu concert. No one organized it or planned it ahead of time. There were many familiar tunes. Somehow it warmed our hearts, everyone became dearer.

Thursday, December 10, 1942

More and more often there was talk about the need to wash the personnel of the company. Recently changed linen, but without washing. I remembered that the other day there was a conversation about some kind of dye house, not far from us. He asked where she was and went to investigate. At the end of a parallel street, almost on the edge of the village, stood a long, squat building made of dung blocks. Some of the windows were without glass. The wind was blowing, it was snowing. I went inside and looked around in the darkness. I saw three boilers smeared into the stove with paint residue. Barrels and buckets were nearby. There are benches against the wall. The stove was intact, and the cauldrons must have been intact if they held water. So, there is a place to heat water. I realized that I had found an excellent place for washing people, which made me very happy. I returned to the company, found Nikolaev, told him, and he willingly went with me to see this building. The foreman approved my idea. We went straight to the commander.

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- No washing yet. Technique should come up - there is a lot of work to be done, and the time is alarming - the situation is very unstable. No time to relax.

"It's always good to wash, but now there's nowhere else, our people are so neglected. Such an opportunity may not present itself," the sergeant-major insisted.

- For now, put your idea aside, let's see how events develop. Keep this opportunity in mind.

The reaction of the commander to our enthusiasm and hopes to wash people did not discourage us. Together we decided to prepare a bath. The sergeant-major promised to send the Red Army soldiers to clog the windows, clean them, and pour the paint out of the boilers and washrooms. Workers chopped firewood in the kitchen. They were waiting for the right moment. The warehouse was in our location in two cars. The head of the transport and clothing service and the storekeeper were on allowance with us, and we received clean linen without difficulty.

Friday, December 11, 1942 HOST COMMANDER.

Food became scarce. Little variety. Millet and some kind of cut. The borsch dressing is also over. There is no fresh meat. We went soups and cereals from the same cereals. Dried vegetables. In the morning there was porridge made from chaff, apparently barley, and herring. Very salty, musty, rusty. And it's a pity to throw it away, and you can't eat it anymore. For lunch, barley soup with beef stew, dried onions and potatoes, seasoned with tomato and vegetable oil. On the second - millet porridge with traces of stew.

Something was cooking in two pans nearby. I asked what it was cooking. The cook Shikhalev replied that it was for the authorities. They continued to cook for the commander and his henchmen separately in a variety of ways and from the best products.

- What? Show.

"See for yourself, if you have the right.

Yes, remove the covers.

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He thought, looked at me, then took a rag and opened the lids.

"What's in there?" I asked again.

- In a large pot of pasta soup. And there is porridge. You can see for yourself - rice.

- Why so much? Eight or ten people can be fed.

- The commander ordered to feed the senior military technician Vanin. He has a disease - an ulcer.

Vanin is now busy repairing a captured vehicle for the commander.

- And the rest to whom?

- I don't know. Ask the foreman. I don't care, and I won't die from the cauldron. I am a small person, I follow orders, and there is nothing to cling to me.

Everything remains the same. The commander is the owner.

Saturday, December 12, 1942 BATH UNDER BOMBING.

The advance of our troops in the south to Kotelnikovo was suspended. At breakfast the sergeant-major announced that we would wash the personnel. The commander gave the go-ahead the day before. They sent people to the dye-house to bring water and melt the cauldrons. Cold water was carried into barrels that stood near the wall. Dana was given the command to come with any dishes that are convenient for washing. A long bench was placed against one wall. In two corners of the room, holes were punched with a crowbar for water to drain. The first room from the entrance served as a dressing room. Mezentssev was stationed on one side with bales of clean linen in one corner, and another corner was set aside for collecting dirty linen. A bench was placed on the opposite side of the room, where they determined a place for changing clothes. Everything seems to have been foreseen. And I chose a place for myself where I put a sanitary bag and a set of "PF" for dressings after washing.

What a pleasure it is to throw off dirty underwear and uniforms soaked in sweat, diesel fuel and lubricating oils, just to expose the body after a long

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period of stay in multi-layered clothes, in which they slept, and ate, and worked, and walked - in a word, they stayed for many, many days. Clubs of steam escaped into the dressing room, which was not heated, but they did not notice the cold. Flushed, they jumped out, dried themselves and rubbed themselves noisily, pushing each other, exchanging heavy slaps, recalling the steam rooms of home peacetime. In the dye-works, where the cauldrons were heated, there was still greater twilight. From time to time the duty officer ran in, threw up firewood, topped up water in boilers and barrels and showed where is the water.

Together with others, a tall, broad-shouldered, tall foreman of the auto platoon, a joker and a joker "Baby" tumbled into the dressing room after washing. It immediately became crowded from his massive body, enthusiastic groaning and ponderous jokes.

The foreman's face and body were covered with dark purple stains, between which small light patches peeked out, and a row of white teeth shone. Dark streams and drops flowed from the hair of the head. Finally, he saw that his body was covered with spots and streaks of paint. It was he who rinsed after washing with the contents of the third cauldron, closed with a lid, which contained, as it turned out later, concentrated dark purple paint.

When he understood the reason for the general laughter, he added additional chords in combination with matyuks to the general fun with his thunderous voice. Many already dressed or half-dressed jumped out of the dressing room and, holding their stomachs, continued to neigh.

It was the laughter of people who survived death, endured unbearable, incomparable stress, finally got the opportunity to relax and do something familiar and unaccustomed, homely.

I washed one of the last. I was almost finishing when I heard a noise, shouting, firing from machine guns, then anti-aircraft guns. There were explosions of bombs. Especially strong explosion

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shook the dye-works, the windows flew out, the plaster fell down. I jumped out into the dressing room. The outer wall and part of the roof collapsed. Through the dust and smoke I saw a yard, a tractor standing nearby, a car, running people, blackened snow, the sky. Anti-aircraft guns were still being fired, then everything was quiet. This, as it turned out, was a German air reconnaissance "rama", after flying over our location, returned and dropped bombs. It can be seen that he was attracted by a smoking chimney and a crowd of people.

Naturally, in my naked form, I had no choice but to look for my clothes among the ruins. The Red Army men began to crawl out of their hiding places. Apparently, the sight of a naked statue covered with plaster against the backdrop of a snowy courtyard, despite the stress experienced minutes ago from the explosion of bombs, initially caused short, timid bursts of laughter with hysterical tears. Gradually, it began to grow, and when we were convinced that there were not even wounded among us, the laughter was freed from some kind of shackles, and its peals soon spread to the nearby yards and the whole street. Our foreman "Kroshka" laughed loudest of all, fortunately, he was no longer the object of laughter. Someone threw a quilted jacket over me, under the rubble of the wall I took out my clothes and began to pull on new underwear and uniforms over my so blissfully washed body, powdered with plaster. This whole procedure was accompanied by explosions of generally good-natured laughter, the second round after last half an hour.

After lunch, the company commander arrived. He reported that from the direction of Kotelnikovo the Germans went on the offensive with large forces. Our troops have entered the battle and are trying to keep the advance of the enemy. He proposed to prepare all vehicles and equipment for a possible evacuation today

and let us go. I did not forget to tell Gulenko to take his captured Opel Captain in tow, and put an experienced driver behind the wheel. Detained me.

- The Germans threw a large force, ours are retreating. Possibly, we will depart at night. Our troops are few, and they

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tanks, lots of tanks. Planes are bombing our battle formations.

He thought about it and turned back to me.

- Tell them to bring me lunch. And let the foreman come. Maybe I can take a shower. Terribly dirty. And when else will it be necessary? To die, then in clean linen.

Why are they talking about death? The situation is no longer the same. The enemy is broken.

- Still very far from it. There are very few of our troops here. There is probably not a single tank left in the brigade, but there is still no replenishment. The German launched some super-heavy tanks. What will you stop? So it goes. Go.

He still managed to wash himself, and the foreman and I washed up after dinner.

And the enemy gave us the most unexpected bath. Unexpected and terrible. He went on the offensive.

Sunday, December 13, 1942 AKSAI LEFT.

The enemy launched a counteroffensive with large forces. Captured Gremyachy, Nebykov, Chilenkov and advanced along the Kotelnikovo-Stalingrad railway. He occupied Zhugovo, where only yesterday there was a medical platoon. They left during the shelling of the Nazis.

To the south, the motorized rifle and machine-gun battalions and the first tank battalion of our brigade occupied the defense. They got involved in the battle, the wounded came from them to the medical platoon, but their further fate was not known. It is possible that, without an order to withdraw, they could all die.

We, without an order from higher authorities, began to load our property onto trucks at night. By morning everything was loaded. They were waiting for the order to leave. Broken units, the wounded, retreated to the north past us. The retreating units passed on news one more terrible than the other. It all boiled down to the fact that the Germans with large forces go to the rescue of their own, surrounded in Stalingrad. The deblocking enemy group has many tanks and planes. And appear

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there were some new super-large impenetrable tanks that destroyed everything in their path.

Parts of the 126th Rifle Division approached Aksay and took up defensive positions. The 51st Army, weakened in previous battles, under the command of General Trufanov, took the brunt of the enemy's offensive. How battered it was can be judged by the combat state of our brigade, which was part of it. The others didn't look any better either.

parts and connections.

In the early morning, the remnants of the 1st battalion passed us to the north without a single tank. All left on the battlefield. Together with them, Naumov, Gen, and several repairmen of wheeled vehicles arrived in a ZIS-5 vehicle. They were seconded to the 1st tank battalion and withdrew with them.

Gen said that the Germans had broken through our extended and rather weak defensive lines and were advancing in a wide wedge to the right of the railway with large tank forces towards Stalingrad. All are swept away on the way. Our units, who succeed and who have time, retreat east to the steppe along the



rule to the lakes, away from the avalanche of German troops rushing north. The units of our brigade retreat to the north literally from under the noses of the advancing enemy units. Many of our crushed and destroyed. Somewhere the remnants of a motorized rifle machine-gun battalion are fighting. The brigade's headquarters was in Umantsevo, but we don't know where it is now. We have no order to retreat, but the units of the brigade are trying to break away from the enemy. They learned from them that the enemy was advancing along the railway and crossed the river in several places. Aksai-Esaulovsky.

It seemed that they drove the enemy and thoroughly, that finally a turning point in the war had come, but it turns out that something was not taken into account. Our strength proved to be insufficient to consolidate and further develop the success of such a major operation. Where did the Germans get such a large force, so many tanks and planes? And they're going great, bastards... Try not to panic when our units, broken and scattered, retreat in panic. And the company commander is confused, does not know what to do.

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Where and from whom to expect an order to withdraw and where to move? The commander of the 1-th tank battalion advised to advance to the area of Plodovitoe, where he himself went with the remnants of his battalion. Kostya Naumov also spoiled the mood here.

- What are we waiting for? Are you going to receive guests? Pistols or carbines to meet the enemy? We have nothing to fight! Gotta leave! Damn got me here. It's all Gena stuff. He decided to go to Aksai. The first tank battalion had to go to Plodovitoe. In an hour or two the Fritz will be here. And what is Mikhailovsky waiting for? The music did not play for a long time, the fraer sang the song for a short time ... - Kostya suddenly began with a hysterical breakdown in his voice.

"What's the matter with you, Kostya?" I asked him.

- The small intestine turned out. Started a business with a half-empty pocket. The brigade did not even have a dozen tanks, and there were not many in other units, so they crushed us.

— There must be reserves, and they will throw them to us to help.

- Until they leave, from you, doctor, and all of us and a wet place will not be left, they will be erased into dust. We need to leave and urgently. Why pull?

"There is no order to withdraw," I objected.

- Who will order you? Where is the brigade headquarters, where are our other units? We must leave until late.

- That one, like him, we have a commander, it's up to him to decide. Don't spread panic," Manko cut him off.

Our conversation was interrupted by the rumble of planes making a semi-circle above us. There were black crosses on the wings. Airplanes dropped bombs on Aksai and left to the northwest. There were many parts here. There were fires, wounded and dead. Fortunately, not a single bomb fell at our location.

After the bombing, the company commander decided to leave Aksai, and we settled in our column in the northeast, a few kilometers from it.

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To the west of our location along the railway there were battles. Artillery cannonade was heard, deaf explosions of bombs. Again retreat, again the Nazis are moving forward. Will there be anything to stop him?

Ivanov found us. I ordered to follow to the Zetas, where our place of deployment will be. He also led our column. Units went to the front towards the front, and we retreated.

The Zetas... Again the Zetas where they were in August of this year. Our company stood there for a particularly long time. Let's go back to square one. Then they retreated to Stalingrad. Will this happen again now?

Our column stopped at the settlement of Abganerovo. Again a meeting with a locality familiar from the August battles. About a dozen vehicles were unloaded on its outskirts, and they departed again for Aksai. The brigade's warehouses remained there, mainly ammunition and part of the diesel fuel for tanks, which are not yet available. There was not enough transport to take them out in one flight.

Near the unloaded property, a group was left for protection and the rest of the cars moved towards the Zetas. By the end of the day we were already there and settled down in the same buildings where our workshops had been before. True, in order to do this, with a scandal, we had to push some artillery unit that was stationed there. All this was done by the efforts of Ivanov. During the night, all of our vehicles and possessions were concentrated in the Zetas. Lieutenant Colonel Ivanov left for Plodovitoe.

Monday, December 14, 1942 BACK TO THE ZETA.

The position of our troops on our outer front is very difficult. The enemy rushed to Stalingrad to release the encircled grouping. Enemy transport planes flew over us, delivering the necessary cargo for their troops in a cauldron. Heavy tank battles were going on southwest of us. The enemy advanced persistently, suffering heavy losses.

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The small units and formations of the 51st Army, weakened by battles, clinging to every inch of the earth, tried to stop the tank releasing ram of Goth. Streams of the wounded were slowly moving past us from the Verkhne-Kumsky region, where heavy bloody tank battles did not stop. According to the wounded, the Germans occupied the Verkhne-Kumsky farm.

I decided to visit the hostess - the teacher, where last time in August there was a first-aid post. I met her at home with two children. Her husband, according to her, served somewhere in the Red Army. She did not leave, she lived here under the Germans. Then came the Romanians. The cow has survived. The horse was taken by the Romanians, who garrisoned here. They took stocks of hay, grain. There was nothing to feed the cow, and they themselves did not know how to make it to the new harvest. The Romanians ruined everyone in the village, took everything they could. Not a single chicken was left. No cock is heard at dawn, which is especially unusual for the ear.

She was warmly welcomed like an old friend. She conceded the same room for the first-aid post. He transferred his medical property to her.

He brought crackers to the hostess - everything he could help them at that time. They were very happy about it too.

Tuesday, December 15, 1942 SERIOUSLY ILL.

The Red Army soldier Zastupin from the transport platoon fell seriously ill. Yesterday he complained of a severe headache when he arrived from the flight. The temperature was already high - over 38 degrees. Prior to that, there was a strong chill. Today the headache was even more excruciating. I suspected meningitis. The patient must be urgently transported to the infectious diseases hospital. Where he was, I did not know. The commander decided to send him to Plodovitoe to the medical platoon tomorrow, early in the morning. Let them figure it out. I insisted on immediate evacuation, but the commander did not allow it. Prepared it for tomorrow. They allocated a GAZ-51 car. Driver Byashirov. With him, I already drove a patient from the Zergent region

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meningitis. And this disease is similar to meningitis, but was embarrassed by a rash on the skin - pinpoint hemorrhages. And they can be with meningitis. This is a serious infectious disease, and it usually does not occur in one case. Epidemic outbreaks are possible.

Wednesday, December 16, 1942

We had breakfast early. The patient, already unconscious, was loaded on a stretcher onto Byashirov's GAZ-51 car.

On the road, sitting in the cab, I saw and felt how severe the winter is in the steppe. Wherever you look, a white veil to the horizon. Crackling frost. The well-trodden road makes its way through the snowdrifts. The wind drives the snow, sweeping high drifts of snow in places, covering the road.

Two or three hours later we were in Plodovit. We found a medical platoon. I reported to Dr. Hasan-Zade in detail about his condition. He climbed into the back of the car, turned away the tarpaulin, tried to speak to the patient, but he was silent.

- There will be no sense from him, but you need to take him. And where to? Dr. Hasan-Zade asked himself a question. They argued what to do with him. A new brigade doctor came - Jatiev. Tall, swarthy, forty-five years old, Caucasian type. He decided to use the same car to take the patient to the infectious diseases hospital, which, as he remembered, was in Raigorod. Straight across the steppe - we'll get stuck in snowdrifts. We refueled the car and left. At the Tinguta station they advised me to go to Tundutovo, Krasnoarmeysk. We followed this route.

After Ivanovka, a German transport plane was noticed. He passed over us, made a circle and went down.

To our left was a graveyard of German aircraft. There was an airfield. You can't see people, but there are a lot of planes, they must have been broken, maybe there were whole ones. With their dark color, they stood out well in the snowy expanse of the steppe. german plane sde

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made another circle above us and dropped some black, cigar-shaped objects on parachutes. They were getting closer to the ground. The plane left, and we, lying in the snow, watched their descent. They landed without an explosion, and we drove across the steppe to them. They were metal containers. They cut off one balloon from the parachute, put it on the end. The driver Fedya Byalpirov and I hid behind a ledge, and I fired a shot at this cylinder from a carbine. There was no explosion, and we ran towards it. Some clear liquid was flowing from the opening of the balloon.

First of all, we thought about alcohol, but Fedya authoritatively concluded that it was aviation gasoline. Must be for refueling planes. We loaded one whole cylinder and two parachutes onto the car, which took up a lot of space, covered them with part of the patient and moved on.

By the end of the day we were in Krasnoarmeysk. Not without difficulty, the patient was transferred to the infectious diseases hospital, where he was given a preliminary diagnosis: meningitis. Our assumptions coincided, but the patient was unconscious and in critical condition.

We decided not to go back for the night. We were refueled. One of the nurses on duty took us to the apartment to spend the night, for which she got one of the parachutes.

Before leaving, they inquired about the patient. He did not regain consciousness, his condition remained extremely heavy.

Thursday, December 17, 1942 ON THE BACK WAY.

In the morning we set off on our way back. Again, snow-covered steppe all around and freezing cold to the point of numbing all parts of the body. They overtook the military units going to the front.

At noon we were in Plodovitye, where we learned that the enemy had reached the Myshkova River, where our fresh troops had approached him. There are heavy fights going on.

Met Lieutenant Colonel Ivanov. I reported that I was going to the Zetas. He ordered that we be loaded with ammunition, handed over to expand the storage for warehouses.

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He said that we were waiting for reinforcements, that ours should go on the offensive and that we would participate as soon as we received reinforcements.

In a car loaded with ammunition, we headed to the Zetas.

Again our retreat. How to understand what is happening? Where did the enemy forces thousands of kilometers from their borders come from?

Friday, December 18, 1942. THE ENEMY FROM THE SOUTH IS FORWARDING TO STALINGRAD.

Streams of cars with the wounded pass us to the north. Heavy fighting continues in the Verkhne-Kumsky area. Parts are there to die. Among the wounded and burned, there are many tankers with frostbite. In many sectors, our troops were forced to retreat to the Myshkova River, offering fierce resistance to the enemy. Units and formations of the 2nd Guards Army of General Malinovsky are approaching the river from the north. The enemy, under the blows of our approaching troops, was stopped at the turn of this river, forty kilometers from the encircled troops in Stalingrad.

We in the Zetas were located west of the railroad leading to Stalingrad, and most of the units of the 2nd Guards Army were passing south, southwest, to meet the enemy past us. Some units stopped and settled in the Zetas. To the east of the railway the enemy occupied Kovalevka, Kruglyakov and was stopped near Aksai, where we had recently been stationed.

Saturday, December 19, 1942 REPLENISHMENT HAS COME.

The brigade received replenishment - tanks with crews, wheeled vehicles, personnel. Cars with ammunition, fuel arrive in the Zetas. We are mainly engaged in storage equipment. Little repair work. Heavy fighting continues at the Myshkovo line, as evidenced by the incessant streams of the wounded.

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The company commander told us that a whole tank regiment, the 189th, had joined the brigade, consisting of 3 tank companies, numbering 32 tanks, a control and technical support company.

Our group of repairmen departed to assist in servicing the equipment of the newly arrived regiment.

Sergeant-major Kruglyakov reported to the commander that he had seen a lined Opel-Captain on the road. Mikhailovsky sent senior military technician Vanin, foreman Kruglyakov and two more repairmen with a car to remove the engine, wheels and something else for spare parts. Decided to provide everything you need your car.

Sunday, December 20, 1942 EVERYTHING IS REPEATING.

Severe frosts persist. Snowfall. There are many cases of frostbite among the personnel. Strong defensive battles continue on the Myshkova River. The enemy is trying to overcome the resistance of our troops, carrying out fierce attacks, but so far he has not been able to advance further than the river. Many new parts come and go in the Zetas. Big battles are coming in these areas.

It's amazing how our fate repeats itself. Also stationed in the Zetas in August, with units of the brigade fighting further south. Then they retreated to Stalingrad under the onslaught of the enemy. Now everything

repeats. The enemy is advancing from the south, ours are retreating to the north, northeast. But there, in Stalingrad, the Germans. Where are we to go?

The enemy goes to the rescue of his own. Goes fast and hard. It takes a lot of power to stop him. And urgently.

There is no communication with the brigade. We are located west of the railroad, and the enemy is advancing southeast of us, and the brigade units are located even further east, in the Plodovitoe area. The enemy can cut us off from his own, if he hasn't already. The situation is very complex and difficult. The Zetas must be left.

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Monday, December 21, 1942 BOMBED THE ZETA.

The Zetas are full of our troops. There were very stubborn bloody battles. There was a constant hum of engines. Troops on the move...

The snow crunched underfoot. The bright sun was not hot. A sharp gusty wind blew snowdrifts. Most of the people in our company are at work. There are few left in the workshops. There are many repairmen in other subdivisions located in Plodovite. Drivers on flights.

A group of Junkers was approaching us. Suddenly, one after another, the planes went into a dive, and black bombs fell off them. I had to lie down, bury myself in the ground, but I kept standing and looking at them. The legs did not obey. People scattered around, burrowed into the snow, clung to fences and houses. Pure white snow lay all around, and everything was clearly visible from above. Each car stood out clearly in the snow. And there was a lot of military equipment and parts here.

When the bombs started to explode, something pushed me, and I crouched against the fence. The bombs began to explode far from us, on the other outskirts of the village.

A new doctor has arrived in the medical platoon instead of Zoya Lodge- 140: (6) 78

The new doctor Lyuba Bolshakova looked very nice. About thirty years old, a slightly plump, flourishing, active woman looked good in this setting. Shura threw a short remark that Maya withered from jealousy, and left. And she whispered to me confidentially that Shura began to linger with Maximov, often visits him, in a word, she got along with him and believes that I am jealous of her.

- This is cool! I exclaimed.

- What's great?

- That Maximov got along with her. Will not come to you.

"And you tease me?" Well, all of you. I miss Zoya, I miss her very much, I miss her. This is the real truth. I am better now. I'm always glad to see you.

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"I thought a lot about you. You are a good person. If I didn't love you, or rather, didn't respect you, I would be more tender towards you, and perhaps more than tender. I understand very well that I cannot be your wife and you are my husband. Don't interrupt! We are not a couple. You are much younger, and in a few years we will not be at all suitable for each other. Someone will be very lucky to be with you. Sure. And you can't live only one day, in a rush. We will be ashamed if we stay alive, for today's crooked day. Yes, crappy day! So understand me, my dear man.

She came up to me, stretched and kissed me on the cheek.

He stood dumbfounded by what had happened.

- Let's be friends. Let's remain good friends as we are. Agreed?

- So be it. Let's be friends, if that's what you want. You are older, wiser, and you know better. Let it be your way. Things at the front get more complicated. What will we get? Wish we meet soon?

Iya left.

The Germans are pushing for Stalingrad. We're taking such big losses. Again, something miscalculated our command.

The driver is waiting for me. He offered to visit the headquarters of the brigade, which we did. I met Lieutenant Colonel Ivanov, very preoccupied, "under gas."

- You're here, what?

- He brought the wounded.

Our deeds are bad, very bad.

Found at Naumov's headquarters. He received spare parts for cars. Together with him, two cars left for the Zetas.

Tuesday, December 22, 1942 STRONG FIGHTING CONTINUES.

Heavy fighting continued at the turn of the Myshkova River. The Nazis made desperate efforts to break through our defenses. Drivers who have arrived from the flight, speak

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whether that a large number of tanks and motorized infantry passed today to Gromoslavka and Vasilyevka - settlements on the Myshkova River. There the advance of the enemy stumbled upon the stubborn resistance of our troops. Sargsyan went to Plodovitoe to lead the repair work. The brigade received tanks with crews. Mostly T-40 and T-70. For days they will go into battle.

Wednesday, December 23, 1942 THE ENEMY IS STOPPED!

The enemy has been stopped! Neither in the Aksai region nor at the turn of the river did he manage to advance towards Stalingrad over the past day.

The enemy has been stopped! All attacks are repulsed! This was told by the wounded passing by us. He was stopped forty kilometers from the encircled troops.

Our vehicles from the transport platoon left for Plodovity with ammunition and fuel. It is amazing that in recent days not a single German aircraft has been seen, not heard of flying over us. Ours fly by many times a day.

Company commander in Plodovit. The enemy is running out of steam, and his advance towards the encircled is failing. The initiative passes to our troops.

Thursday, December 24, 1942 TRAGEDY IN ZUTOV.

Last night, a brigade consisting of two tank and motorized rifle machine-gun battalions left Plodovity in the direction of Aksai. Along the railway and to the west of it, units and formations of the 2nd Guards Army went on the offensive. This was reported to us by the company commander, who arrived in the morning from Plodovitoy. He ordered me to go with electricians, who are sent to the Aksai, Zhutov area, where they should join our repairmen, who are part of

technical support groups. Lieutenant Zavgorodny was appointed senior. I was sent with this group to provide medical

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help our repairmen who have hand injuries. I stuffed a full sanitary bag with dressings. We received dry rations for three days, had breakfast and left. They put on boots on their feet. It was comparatively warm in the summer house, and a snowstorm was raging around and the frost was very strong.

About three hours later we were in Aksai. We were not found there. Let's go to Zhutgov-1. They found a terrible picture there. On a large square, among the houses and tents crushed by tanks, here and there one could see frozen corpses in bandages, powdered with snow. These were our wounded, who accumulated in the field medical institutions located here. They did not have time to evacuate before the sudden offensive of the Germans. A group of German tanks broke through here and committed this monstrous crime - they ironed the premises and tents with the wounded, who were not able to resist. It must have happened on the fourteenth or fifteenth of December. So everything remained. The Germans did not have time to cover up the traces of the crimes. In many places, shields with a red cross were visible.

We were met by a military patrol guarding the area. They were waiting for some kind of commission, which should record these atrocities. With their permission, in one of the destroyed houses, I collected dressings and an almost new wadded envelope intended for wrapping and transporting the wounded. The latter will come in handy for me in such cold weather. Our flyer followed to Kovalevka. They found our medical platoon, a control company there.

While Zavgorodny was asking how to find the headquarters of the brigade, the new brigdoctor Jatiev ordered me to stay in the medical platoon to help my colleagues in providing medical care to the wounded. I tried to explain to him that I was going to my front line, that the repairmen needed my help, but he ordered me to stay here. Like, there, in the battalions, there is a paramedic and they will turn to them.

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He told Zavgorodny that he was leaving me to work in the medical platoon.

"For the time being, help Shepshelev with loading and sending the wounded," Jatiev ordered, "and after they are sent, you will go to the disposal of Dr. Bolshakova.

And I began to help with loading the wounded onto an ambulance and a truck covered with a tarpaulin. It was very cold. I was freezing on the street, the more the wounded were freezing, and they would be especially cold in a truck. He asked about straw to lay on the bottom of the body. And where to get it, they asked me.

In addition, one more misfortune fell to our lot - cold, severe frosts.

Friday, December 25, 1942 ONE DAY OF WORK OF THE MEDICAL SANITARY PLANT.

All night long, the wounded arrived, mostly by passing vehicles from the headquarters of the brigade and tank battalions. Once they brought me in an ambulance, which was at the disposal of the military assistant of the Gomelsky control company. He brought a group of wounded commanders from the brigade headquarters and Red Army soldiers from his company. The brigade headquarters was bombed. In the battalion, almost all the tanks were out of action: they were knocked out and burned down. The bulk of the tankers perished along with the vehicles.

On an ambulance in the morning, the military assistant of the motorized rifle battalion Modzelevsky brought the wounded. The battalion suffered heavy losses. He said that half of the personnel died. He unloaded the wounded and immediately left for his own.

In front of the advancing brigade were initially Romanian troops. They did not put up serious resistance, they retreated, and ours successfully pursued and smashed them. Yesterday we ran into the Germans. They turned out to have some very formidable new large tanks that not a single shell can take. And they destroyed everything in their path. That's what our wounded said.

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Doctor Hasan-Zade met and received cars with the wounded. He climbed into the back of the car, inspected and gave orders, whom where to unload. The bulk of the wounded were placed in the hallway, and then they were transferred to the corridor and laid on one side along the windows. Opposite the rooms, a dressing room, an operating room, a pharmacy, and a household or utility room were set up. It was cold in the corridor and in the hallway, a little above zero, although the iron stove was heated. The operating room and the dressing room were heated by one common stove. Bolshakova and Shura worked in the operating room. Shepshelev helped them. Now he was on the evacuation, Ivanov was preparing tea and distributing it with sugar and crackers to the wounded. I was sent to help Maya. Dr. [asan-Zadeh stood at the operating table several times a day when severe wounded with damage to the chest or abdominal cavity got in. He also came to us, participated in the treatment of wounds, excised dead or close to that flaps in the wounds, removed surface fragments. As a lively dangled between everyone and always turned out to be there when there was a need for it. I assisted in the treatment of wounds, mainly bandages and splints. They carried the wounded into the hallway, where they were collected for evacuation, the orderlies helped me with this. The seriously wounded were left on stretchers, while the lighter ones were laid on the floor or seated along the wall. There weren't enough stretchers for everyone. The wounded arrived in waves. Were severe in a state of shock with extensive wounds to the limbs, abdominal cavity. Often corpses were brought in, some died right there in the hallway, and they were taken out to a shed in the yard. Many had frostbite. The cold complicated the condition of the wounded, although they felt better with burns in the cold.

The only iron stove was hot, but it was not able to heat the hallway.

Maya consoled the wounded with a stereotypical phrase, but everyone perceived it only for themselves: "Be patient, dear, be patient, I'll finish soon ..."

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"What more difficult could fate put on the shoulders of such fragile creatures as these trials," I thought, looking at her. Will this go unnoticed? It is difficult to see the tears of our medical women, who cannot contain them.

So the day passed. By the end of it, I could hardly stand on my feet. But what about women?

From time to time we sat down on a bench against the wall. I really wanted to lie down, stretch my legs or lift them. But there was no time, and it was uncomfortable in front of women. Perhaps they are stronger than us physically or spiritually. Or rather, the latter. During the break, I suggested that Maya lie down on a stretcher and rest a little. She refused. The wounded arrived late into the night.

They brought thermoses with porridge from the kitchen of the control company. They fed the wounded. On the way, I ate some porridge from the pot. Doctor Maya refused.

Already with the onset of darkness, Dr. Hasan-Zade quarreled with the drivers of transport vehicles that brought the wounded. They refused to take them further north to a medical battalion or hospital, where the escort would be able to hand them over. Proved that they must return as quickly as possible to Part.

"You jackals, you have no conscience," he shouted, "people are dying, they need urgent specialized medical care, which cannot be provided here, and you are killing them. The killers!"



Still, he convinced the drivers. Before loading, they still had time to feed and water the wounded. Medical instructor Ivanov left with them.

When the last two cars were sent, we all collapsed, where Bolshakova could be on a stretcher in the operating room, Dr. Maya and Shura on a stretcher in the dressing room, I lay down in the corridor on a stretcher and covered myself with an overcoat, but sleep did not go - everything was cold body.

Dr. Hasan-Zade sat down next to the stove. I did not go to bed, although there were free stretchers nearby. Sleep did not take everything, and I got up, sat down by the stove. We talked to him.

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- If we survive this massacre, tell me, how will we live then? Blood and suffering will not leave the memory. They will be in front of your eyes for the rest of your life. Because of this, I do not go to bed, there is no sleep - I see only nightmares.

"We must stay alive first, doctor, get out of this hell, and then already think about how to live." further.

- Maybe we will get out, we will survive, but how? thought the doctor. And for the first time I thought, what will we be like after all this?

Saturday, December 26, 1942 CONTINUATION.

We were picked up again at night. A truck came with the wounded from a motorized rifle machine-gun battalion. They were placed in the corridor. We examined them, corrected bandages and tires for some of them. Nearly all did well. The good work of Dr. Panchenko and military assistant Modzelevsky was visible. The car went further on assignment. There were no cars in the medical platoon, so we decided to leave the wounded until the morning. In the morning, the head of the political department, battalion commissar Maksimov, and Lieutenant Colonel Ivanov, deputy head of the brigade, drove by. Briefly describe the situation.

The Romanian army was defeated. The rest of her retreat. German units with new Tiger tanks entered the battle, but they were overturned, and ours are chasing the retreating enemy. Maksimov asked how many wounded had passed through the medical platoon. He said that there were few personnel left in the battalions, almost all the tanks had been lost. The new tank regiment, which had just arrived in the brigade, was also badly battered. Perhaps we will leave the battles for the formation. Lieutenant Colonel Ivanov spoke with Dr. Hasan-Zade, then told me that I would go with him. Commissar Maximov secluded himself with Shura, they were whispering something fervently. Maya, pointing to them, said that Shurochka was making progress - interested Maximov and even more.

"Nothing threatens me, if not death from a bullet or shrapnel.

"Get in the car, doctor," Ivanov called me.

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Everyone came out to see us off. This is because Maksimov was leaving. Still, the head of the political department of the brigade. Say goodbye to everyone. Dr. Gasan-Zade and especially warmly Maya thanked me for my help. One could think from the side that I helped them a lot, but I realized that it was so convenient for Maya to say goodbye to me. She even kissed me in front of everyone, which caused a revival, replicas and jokes followed. I even felt uncomfortable.

I climbed into the back of Lieutenant Colonel Ivanov's car. We walked along a well-trodden road, along which a lot of our and enemy equipment lined up was lying. Soon he began to freeze in the body. Feet were in felt boots, wrapped in a tarpaulin, curled up, and the frost made its way through clothes to the bones.

We stopped in the village of Zhutov-2, where the headquarters of our 254th tank brigade was located. The battalion commissar Maksimov remained, and Lieutenant Colonel Ivanov, after a short time, went further with me and brought me to the area where our repair units and vehicles were concentrated. I was received very warmly. They invited me to one of the summer camps, where he began to do his usual business - he made dressings and provided people with other medical care. Lieutenant Colonel Ivanov told everyone that in a few days the brigade would withdraw from the fighting and be sent for reorganization.

Saturday, December 26, 1942 MILITARY TRIBUNAL.

On that day, I had to endure a difficult situation. In the afternoon, senior lieutenant Kitaichik, authorized by the special department, came to pick me up. He "served" our company as well. He said that we would go to the first tank battalion. There is a military tribunal trial over our three tankers, and specifically, why I was needed there, he did not say. We arrived at a snow-covered wide ravine, where the Red Army men and the commanders of the first tank battalion were gathered and stood in separate groups. After some time, a command followed, and units were built in

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one row of four people. I joined the group of commanders on the right flank next to Kitaichik.

From the booth of the Tribunal's car with barred windows they led out three defendants in tunics without belts and buttonholes, without hats. Everyone's hands are tied behind. Two escorts with machine guns in front of them, one in front, the other behind, led them along the beam and placed them about fifty meters in front of the formation. Convoy steel on the sides somewhat behind. Two of the defendants are still very young - boys of about eighteen, the third is older.

One of the representatives of the military tribunal with a sleeper in his buttonholes opened the folder and read the verdict before the formation. Its essence was that the day before, when the battalion launched an attack on enemy positions, their crew did not leave the starting line due to a malfunction of the tank. The technical commission of the brigade and representatives of the special department came to the conclusion that the tank was deliberately put out of action by the crew members. They were put on trial by a military tribunal. There they admitted it. This was done by an older driver, and he was supported by the commander of the vehicle and the gunner. For treason, a military tribunal sentenced them to the highest measure of punishment - execution. The sentence began to be carried out.

On command, a group of submachine gunners came out in front of the formation and turned to the convicts, standing between us and them. After a command from the representative of the military tribunal, the machine guns were raised in front of them to fire. At this time, one of the convicted young tankers knelt down and yelled: "Brothers, don't kill! Forgive me, let me atone for the guilt with blood, in battle with blood, forgive me, don't kill, brothers "- crawled to the ranks, falling face down into the snow, hastily rising and falling again, losing balance, since his hands were tied behind his back and that's it. begged, weeping angrily, not to kill him. This desperate plea, the cry of a man, my age, who realized that he must die right there, now from his own, tore my soul. And not only

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mine. One of the representatives of the military tribunal ran up to him, called one of the submachine gunners who was standing behind the convicts, and together, taking him under the armpits, they dragged him through the snow back to the two who were standing. They tried to put him on his feet, but he kept sinking into the snow, sitting on his knees, buttocks, and they all tried to raise him, but his legs could not hold him. At the same time, he continued to lament: "Do not kill!" And wept hysterically. The tribunal left him lying on the snow, ran up to the commander in command of the submachine gunners, and said something to him, at the same time he waved to two guards standing on the sides of the convicts, and they joined the formation of a group of submachine gunners. Hastily sounded the command: "Ogoni for the traitors to the Motherland." There was an eerie silence. The two who were standing collapsed into the snow as if hacked off. The head of the sitting man bowed, continued to sit on his knees for some time, then slowly fell.

I and the entire formation stood motionless, as if petrified. The silence was broken by the command: "Disperse the units in their places!" No commands followed, and no one moved. They couldn't remember what they saw. The shock shackled everyone ... Some of the commanders finally came to their senses. Another command rang out, followed by others hurriedly, and the units began to leave this place.

Kitaichik approached me and said that I had to examine them and testify in the protocol the state of death of all those who were shot. We had to go to the dead. But I couldn't move. He once again reminded me, but, apparently, everything did not reach me, what was required of me. "Let's go, let's go, doctor," he hurried me, took me by the sleeve and led me to the dead. I examined them. Bloody spots appeared on their tunics in different places of the torso, abdomen and on the trousers in the thigh area. He felt the pulse on his still warm forearms. In two, the pulse was not palpable and their pupils were dilated. The third had a weak pulse beat and the pupils were constricted,

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point. He was still alive. I said that they were dead, returned to the table, signed the protocol in triplicate without reading it, and walked away from this place.

Not only me - everyone was struck by this case. The word "struck" does not express all that I and many others experienced at that time. I have seen many deaths. From wounds received in battle, in accidents, diseases, but these deaths? For what? Three of our guys. These two boys. What did they see in life? Perhaps this was the first test that fell to them - to go into battle, and they became cowardly. He put the tank out of action alone, and they silently supported, perhaps unconsciously, perhaps they could not object to the elder. They would be sent by court to a penal battalion, where they would consciously atone for their guilt with blood in battle. Died or would have survived. And that would be fair.

I shared this with Pugachevsky, who came up to comfort me, seeing my condition. Major Pugachevsky was the head of a special department, or the head of the brigade's counterintelligence, or, as this service is also called, SMERSH. We have already met with him. Stocky, medium height, dark-haired mane with grey, simple round glasses. Reminds me of a teacher. His answer boiled down to the fact that such is the law of war. For treason to the Motherland - death. This is a warning to everyone else. My objections that their betrayal was not yet realized, that it was due to circumstances, momentary fear, did not receive understanding from him. He stood for the letter of the law. It was not easy for me to accept the need to take the lives of our people. The laws of wartime are merciless, just like war itself.

I asked Pugachevsky:

Where will these corpses go?

- Bury them.

What will parents and family be told?

- According to the law, that they were convicted by a military tribunal, and the content of the verdict. It happens that other formulations are used.

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- Cruel. Pity the parents. Spare them. It is better to report that they died or disappeared without lead.

- Sometimes they write the latter.

"Maybe that's the way it should be. For relatives.

I also asked him:

- If you were in the funeral team and during the burial you would see that one of them is alive. How would you deal with him?

He looked at me intently, was silent for a while, then said:

- The law does not provide for such a case. Personally, as a member of the funeral team, I would have sent him to the medical battalion, like an ordinary wounded man.

I gratefully extended my hand to him. I saw in front of me something very close to me in spirit of a person, not the same as he had previously seemed to me in his position.

The Chinaman took me. I couldn't come to my senses. They knew where they were taking me. Lieutenant Zavgorodniy and electrician Sergeant Sinitsyn participated in the commission to determine the cause of the tank malfunction. It was they who discovered her. Voropaev asked me how everything was in the tribunal, but I did not answer anything to anyone, I could not, I was afraid to burst into tears. I walked near the cars, I was cold. Refused and oteda.

We received a command to depart for our group in the Zetas. The collections were short-lived. We left at dusk. He sat down in a flyer, huddled in a corner and gave himself up to his thoughts. Dozing or not, but before my eyes, as soon as I close them, the boy tanker crawled and crawled on his knees with his hands tied behind his back to the standing formation of his fellow soldiers: "Brothers, don't kill, forgive me ..." This desperate cry and cry all sounded in my head, compressed, as if in a vise, in the temples with unbearable pain. Tears flowed from my eyes, I could not hold them. Barely kept himself from sobbing. What happened with me? With my mind, I understood that a tribunal was also needed for war, but my consciousness could not come to terms with the death of these

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people I don't know. We should not be so cruel to our people. And so many cruelties are caused by the enemy.

Well, I'm drooling. Raskis. He took out a rag of parachute silk, which replaced a handkerchief, and ran it over his face. I did not want others to see my condition, but they, perhaps, did not pay attention to me. I sat on the floor of the car in the corner, pulled my head into the collar, leaning against the wall, trying to sleep. There was a heated argument about something, something was discussed, but the essence of the conversation did not reach me.

Team "Come out, come! brought me back to reality. The car was standing. I must have dozed off. We were in the Zetas. It was night. Under the headlights of cars was loading. We were told that in the morning we were leaving for a new location.

Sunday, December 27, 1942 MARCH 8.

By combat order of the commander of the troops of the Stalingrad Front, the 254th Tank Brigade is being withdrawn from the 51st Army. She will have to make a march to the area of the collective farm. March 8 and join the 57th Army as a reserve commander.

Our cars were loaded all night. Airborne vehicles from other divisions of the brigade arrived, loaded the property of warehouses. It was not possible to load everything at once. Waiting for additional cars from the brigade. Cars arrived with submachine gunners from a motorized rifle battalion. The submachine gunners were seated more closely and the remaining ammunition was loaded onto the vacated vehicles. The brigade headquarters and the control company had already passed us. Tank battalions drove in and took away the remaining fuel in the warehouses. The medical platoon also passed. Lieutenant Colonel Ivanov supervised the loading of transport.

The company commander asked me why he had not reported that he had returned. He answered that Gulenko, the head of the group, was supposed to report on everyone. "How did you fight?" - he asked. "How

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in the war," he answered and added: "I broke a tank regiment with a sanitary bag." "Are you kidding me, doctor? Come on, keep going." Such a conversation took place with the company commander. I really understood how unpleasant this person is to me, from whom I did not expect anything good.

Our company was the last to leave Zeta. It was a sunny frosty day. I got into one of the repair flights. It was even hot. The stove was heated, they smoked. Smoke was blowing from the stove into the car. They coughed, but it was warm.

Already in the evening they arrived at the settlement "Kolkhoz im. March 8". We marched over 60 kilometers. The village was made up of a long main street and alleys branching off from it. Most of the houses were wooden, some of them were made of brick.

The company was located on the outskirts of the village in long tall wooden buildings such as koshar. Cars entered the gate freely, and they were placed along the walls there.

We dined or dined on the street, near the sheds. It's already dark. At first we settled in cars for the night, then we danced around them more so as not to freeze. Not everyone was able to squeeze into the heated tents, but even there, from the smell of smoke and sweaty footcloths, it was very difficult to stay all night.

I decided to use a cotton envelope for the night. On a truck, he put a stretcher on top of the property, put an envelope on top and in felt boots, a tunic and trousers, and in a cap with earflaps on his head climbed into it, covering himself with an overcoat and cape on top. I thought that I would sleep in the oven, but it did not work out. My back began to feel cold. The cold made its way first from below from under the stretcher, then the legs in felt boots began to feel chilly. In boots! The stretcher and envelope were a bit short for me, and my legs stuck out from under the envelope in felt boots. Everything began to be fettered by cold, the body was pierced by aching, growing pain in the lower back and knees. It was impossible to turn around, the "oven" would open, and it seemed that

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then all the cold of the street will crawl into me. I wanted to stretch. Further, to endure the cold and pain became unbearable, and I crawled out of my lair, warmed up and spent the rest of the night with many of my brother-soldiers near the melting kitchens under the moon and starry sky, impatiently waiting for breakfast to somehow warm up.

Monday, December 25, 1942 NACHFIN WOUNDED.

Walked around the village. Interested in wells. Tried to find a medical platoon. The entire village was literally crammed with troops. The streets and lanes are crowded with all sorts of military vehicles, weapons and equipment. All yards were stuffed with them. The houses were not destroyed. Above the rooftops, tempting columns of smoke curled from the chimneys, reminiscent of home comfort, boiled potatoes with fried onions and bacon, or pancakes with sour cream. When will this hour come and will it come? Still not warmed up. I got very cold at night, like most of my comrades. Breakfast warmed me up a bit, warmed up and brisk walking. I walked and thought about how to get warm for this night and the next. For myself and all others. There was no point in putting the stove in the pits - it would not warm the street. The barn was smaller. A household platoon with its property was located there, kitchen equipment and part of the food warehouse were unloaded there.

How would you make everyone warm while in a populated area? We need to tell the commander something. He has other concerns. So, the barn is smaller than the koshar, and on one side there should be wooden floors or wooden flooring for grain. They could serve as bunk beds for personnel. And on the contrary, put a barrel - a stove for heating. This one stood in the workshops in Aksai and Zeta. This is what should be offered. Looked at some wells. They were all used, and the water was good, according to those who used it, but in the afternoon they became empty - the water was almost completely drained. The wells were not guarded.

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I talked with Manko about equipping an overnight stay for drivers. He said that most of his people were on flights, and that the part that was in place was resting in the cabins. Gulenko, the commander of the repair platoon, picked up my idea, and together we went to the commander. He also instructed him to equip a place in the barn for rest and stay of his platoon and the rest of the personnel of the company. The farm platoon separated itself from everyone with a partition. A barrel-stove was installed against the wall opposite the bunks, a pipe was brought out and flooded. This was mainly done by the Red Army soldier Ozheshko, a master of all trades. Several tarpaulins for the personnel were spread on the wooden flooring. There was no straw yet. Thus, they created a place where it was possible to warm up. Here I did dressings, provided various medical assistance to the personnel. His property - a set of medicines, dressings, a stretcher, put a cotton envelope near the partition with a household platoon. Here he marked his place.

A messenger came running after me, pale and alarmed, and asked me to urgently run to the commander with a sanitary bag. He hurried me a lot.

- What's happened?

- You'll see it there.

The commander and his entourage — Kalmykov and Kitaichik — were located in the house, from where someone survived. They let me go ahead to a heated room. Everyone parted. On the bed lay a pale chieftain, a senior lieutenant in his forties, lying on his back. He came to us instead of the deceased chief financial officer in the Elkhi gully.

"He's wounded," said Kalmykov, trembling.

— How, where?

"Doctor, look at your belly," said Mikhailovsky, who had been silent until now.

I threw off my overcoat, went to the bed, unbuttoned the victim's trousers, lifted his shirt. Nachfin showed his hand below. Pulled up his trousers and saw under the bloodied

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with a towel above the pubis a small hole, slightly smeared with blood.

- What is it?

He pointed with his chin at Mikhailovsky.

- Wounded by a bullet. What can be done? — the question followed.

Who fired and how? Where was the shot from? What position was he in?

"Then it's not for you, Doctor. What can you do? Perhaps bandage it, - ordered the commander.

Where did the bullet come from? It is important for me to assess which organs are damaged. Is there another hole, was the victim standing or sitting.

- A bullet flew in front.

I ran my hands along the wounded man's back. They were dry. He turned him carefully on his side, examined the buttocks, the sacrum, but did not find other holes on the body. It was a bullet and penetrating wound to the small pelvis. The bladder, intestines could be damaged. Must be internal bleeding - pale, rapid pulse of little filling.

- We need to lead to the medical platoon. An urgent operation is needed.

- In the medical platoon - an extra waste of time. Take me to the hospital," Mikhailovsky ordered.

"Where?" I asked.

- Where is the nearest hospital?

- I was at the Tundutovo station. I know that there are surgical hospitals in Beketovka.

- You'll take me to the Tundutovo station, it's closer there. Kalmykov, go and prepare a flatbed vehicle with an awning. Take a tarp, blankets. What else do you need on the road, doctor?

- Now I'll put a bandage on. I'll take a stretcher. A mattress is possible.

I anointed the wound with iodine tincture, put a sterile bandage over it, injected morphine - anesthesia

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pouring and corazol - a heart remedy. They carried the wounded man to the car and drove off.

A little over two hours later we were at the Tundutovo station. The condition of the wounded was satisfactory. I took him to the Surgical Field Mobile Hospital. I had forward area cards, and I filled out one of them, stating that I had been hit by a stray bullet. We have no luck with chief financial officers.

From fragmentary conversations during the loading of the wounded and from his words, one can imagine how this happened. In the room were company commander Mikhailovsky, his deputy Kalmykov, Kitaychik, and a Red Army stoker. The company commander was busy at the table with a small trophy teak pistol, the handle of which was made of white, apparently ivory, inlaid with a beautiful pattern of metal and stones. I got it from one of ours after the battles in the Zhutgovo region. Nachfin reported to him about something. At that moment, a shot was fired, the Chief Finn grabbed his stomach, began to squat and fell to the floor. They put him on the bed and called me. Of course, the shot happened by accident.

Came for dinner. I immediately went to the commander and reported to him where I had taken the wounded. He told me that if they were interested in this wounded man, I should say that I was called to the commander, where I helped the wounded man and took him to the hospital. And that I don't know anything else.

"Yes, exactly," I replied.

Tuesday, December 29, 1942 SET UP IN THE DUGMENT.

I became numb and froze on the second night in a new place. Everything would have ended well. You need somewhere to decide on the warmth. And that night he went to bed on a stretcher. He also climbed into a cotton envelope, but took off his felt boots. He wrapped his legs in footcloths. He left his trousers and tunic on. Underneath were simple and warm underwear. Zipped up the envelope

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himself, put a sanitary bag under his head and covered himself with an overcoat. The stretcher was in the barn at the opposite end of the bunk from the stove.

The cold, it is true, was less bothersome than the previous night, but it was impossible to lie down on a stretcher for a long time: the clamps pressed into the pelvis and into the shoulder blades, the legs hung down, it was inconvenient to turn around, and I had to get out of them. And the dream did not go: everything that happened to the chief financial officer did not go out of his head. How could he, Mikhailovsky, allow such negligence in the handling of weapons and injure him, and how

get out of this story? Will he have to get out? No one will say anything, and so everything will pass ...

I went to the stoked barrel, near which I was not alone. He alternately warmed his chest, then his back. The barrel-stove was red-hot, burning near it, and a few meters away it was already pretty cold.

On the bunks they slept close to each other, covered with overcoats and capes. Most of the overcoats were not taken off, many of them wore a cap with earflaps, tied at the chin. There was a funny picture. Everyone tried to lie in the middle, and someone was pushed out to the edges. Freezing, the last one woke up and climbed into the middle, and someone again found himself on the edge. Such movement was observed throughout the night. Some of those pushed to the edge went to warm themselves by the stove.

The company commander and most of the commanders slept in tents, which were heated. The drivers of these vehicles, who heated the stoves, junior commanders and part of the Red Army soldiers of special departments, also settled there. Some of the business executives had slept until now in a closed car, which was not heated, but last night they all settled in the barn, next to us behind a partition. It was worse for the Red Army soldiers from the repair platoon, auto platoon, but somehow they got along. I could decide in any heated summer house, maybe they would not kick me out, but by doing this I would deprive someone of a place in the warmth and did not dare to do so. While there was no fixed place.

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At lunchtime, Manko asked me how I spent the night, and when he said that I was freezing, he suggested that I go to his dugout. The foreman "Kroshka" offered him a dugout, which was freed after the departure of some part - he managed to capture it. They cleaned it up and put in a stove. True, I was given the condition that the dressings should be done elsewhere. To do this, he equipped a place in the barn on the edge of the bunk, marking it with a stretcher and a flag with a red cross. Apart from Manko, Naumov, the foreman "Kroshka", the driver Byashirov and another driver were accommodated in the dugout, so far without a car. He slept in the dugout and heated it.

Wednesday, December 30, 1942 FIGHT AGAINST LICE.

The personnel did not take off their uniforms for many weeks. They also slept in it, if they could sleep. For many days, it happened, they did not take off their overcoats, sheepskin coats. Especially drivers who spent days on flights, and so it was with repairmen. After randomly checking the drivers arriving from flights, I found that two had lice and nits.

Examined in the barn near the stove. These more than a month did not change linen - were on the road. In such a cold, when we were constantly freezing, it seemed that the lice simply could not start, but no, these conditions turned out to be quite suitable for them. Urgent action had to be taken.

I talked with Manko and Gulenko about the need to make a primitive flask. He proposed to make from two 200-liter iron barrels. Adapt the first barrel for the stove, make a hole for the furnace and for the chimney. Cut out the top lid and put another barrel on it, also without a top lid. Instead, make a net with hooks on which you can hang uniforms and underwear, and close all this with a tight lid on top. Linen should not touch the bottom and side walls of the barrel. To do this, at the bottom of the barrel and on the sides, strengthen the metal mesh. In the upper barrel with hot air, disinfection and disinfestation of linen and washing will be carried out.

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dilation. This project has been accepted. Reported to the company commander, and he gave the go-ahead. Of course, I got it from him. It turned out that I started the lice in the company. The Red Army tinsmith Ozheshko was appointed to perform this work. Sargsyan supervised and provided materials.



The washer was made and installed right there in the barn in one of the corners. There were hunters and on the same evening it was launched.

Three or four batches of linen were loaded along with uniforms. After half an hour, the bookmark was taken out. Not only were the insects destroyed, but the laundry was on the verge of an outbreak. Places of clothing that touched the wall of the barrel were burned. They began to lay down less firewood and continued to process linen and uniforms in batches until late. While the processing was going on, people warmed themselves by the nearby stove-barrel or sat on the bunks, hiding behind their overcoats. The air temperature around was barely above zero. Some preferred to stay with the lice, just not to freeze. But this opinion was not held for long, when they were convinced that the lice were dying. We decided that henceforth the clothes of all those returning from flights must be passed through this unit. The main thing is that the fight against lice has been established.

We celebrated housewarming in the dugout. Slept without a hymn-sterok. They were illuminated by a sleeve, flattened at the top, from which a wick protruded - a piece of footcloth. The stove smoked, the cartridge case smoked, but we were saved from the cold. I slept perfectly that night, for the first time in a while.

Received replenishment of personnel. Many have already fought, some after hospitals. People were of different ages, different professions: drivers, mechanics, tractor drivers, carpenters and other craftsmen. Tanks with crews arrived in the battalions. We sent a group of repairmen to assist them in the maintenance and repair of equipment. I looked at the arrivals. Physically, they were not so hot. Sometimes wounds ache, sometimes chronic diseases...

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After lunch I went to the medical platoon. It was necessary to get some of the medicines, dressing material. The medical platoon was located in the same house with a fence. Cars loaded with property were parked in the yard. They set up a dressing room in a larger room, and the men stayed and slept in the same place. For the women there was a smaller room in the annex, where there was one bed and two stretchers on the floor. A stove was heated in the dressing room, but it weakly heated the whole room. The dressing could still be done, but it was so crowded that there was nowhere to examine the patient. With great difficulty, we managed to win back this house for the medical platoon from another unit. There are a lot of troops here. Prepare to defeat the encircled enemy grouping.

I put all the received property in a duffel bag, but I was in no hurry to my place, I was waiting for something.

Are you looking for Maya? Shura turned to me. For some reason, she began to turn to "you", but before this meeting she always turned to "you".

Yes, I would like to see her.

- She walks, your Maya.

- Not mine at all. And why are you so about her?

— Look, look for your saint.

- Why didn't you like her?

- There is nothing to build a saint out of yourself and to your own detriment. It should be easier, like me. No problems, no worries!

- Everyone lives according to his own understanding and does so. You've had a lot of friends here. Others have their own way of life.

- How much I have had or will have is my concern. Don't go where you don't belong. You won't be there. Kill yourself on the nose, - she switched to "you".

- What got into you? Did anyone offend?

- That's how they offend.

"Sorry, I didn't mean to. This is the tone you chose, and that's it.

"That's enough, let's not." Maya is nice, and I know that you are not indifferent to her. Maybe more than that. I envy her

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here I am angry. And who knows, maybe she's jealous of me? Who knows how much of that life is left. Is it worth it to look after yourself. If it weren't for the war, I would certainly have treated myself differently. And how much more is she given to me, you know? No. And I don't know. So can you reproach me for ripping out fleeting joys from this bloody life and giving it, this joy, just as temporary, perhaps, in this world ... - she said this more to herself, although she addressed me. She thought for a moment, then shook her curls and said fervently: "Why am I upset? Shura, get a grip. Live until life is taken away! Rejoice and please others while you can. Don't get upset! And we won't. Maya will not come soon. She went to the motorized rifle, to Dr. Panchenko. Will sit there.

"Yeah, it looks like I can't wait for her. Say hello to her, tell her that you were waiting, you wanted to see.

And, taking a duffel bag, he went to his location. "It is unfair to reproach or offend Shura," I thought along the way. - She has her own attitude to life, her own vision of happiness at the moment in this bloody time. Or is it a shield that covers her unfortunate fate and many millions of women in this war? .. "

When I arrived at the barn, there was a conversation among my comrades that a new political officer had arrived in the company. The commander took him to our location. Before dinner, a company was formed, and the commander introduced him to the personnel. Not very prominent, a senior lieutenant, of medium height, strongly built, about forty years old. He said that he fought in the infantry, was wounded, and after the hospital was sent here, to our company. In civilian life, he worked at the plant as a machine tool assembly technician. Knows wheeled vehicles. He behaved very simply and liked it. Let's see how it turns out in life.

Thursday, December 31, 1942 NEW YEAR'S EVE.

Almost before lunch I did dressings in the barn. I was called to the barn, where transport vehicles were located. They said one of the new ones had fallen and was writhing in pain.

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I ran there. On the earthen floor near the cars, a Red Army soldier was rolling from side to side, shouting furiously at the same time.

His comrades surrounded him. They parted at my appearance and let me through. When they said that the doctor had come, he began to lament and groan even more strongly, shouting out that he could no longer endure the pain in his stomach. It was not immediately possible to ask and examine him, he kept shouting and asking for something to stop the pain, or to kill him, he was in so much pain. Didn't look at it here. The frost here was within ten degrees, and the crowd interfered. I sent for a stretcher to the barn, and he, screaming and groaning, was carried there.

In the barn he shifted it to the edge of the bunks, unbuttoned his overcoat, lifted his tunic. lowered his pants and began to examine and feel the stomach. It was given badly to examination: he inflated his stomach, strained, resisted, but it was possible to establish that the stomach was soft. The breathing is clear, the heart worked normally, it did not pound, as happens with a catastrophe in the abdominal cavity or elsewhere. I thought about a possible breakthrough of a stomach or duodenal ulcer, but objective signs

did not have. He kept screaming and insisted to take him to the hospital, urgently to help him. Thin, frail, small in stature. Everything could be, but I did not believe him. I decided to watch him, but he continued to scream, and I gave him a medicine that had no effect in this case - two tablets of calcium gluconate, which do not relieve pain and are generally useless.

He began to calm down. Half an hour later I was called to him again. He screamed and cursed that I was not sending him, that he would die without help. I examined him again, and was convinced with even greater certainty that he was feigning. I told him bluntly that he was faking it and that I would have to hand him over to a military tribunal if he continued like this. He suggested that he lie down for a while, calm down, gave him drops of valerian and said that in an hour or two I would come and he should already be healthy by this time. That's how it all happened.

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He slept for a couple of hours, then said that it became easier. I left him in the barn, where it was more convenient to observe him.

During the day there was an emergency. One bookmark of linen and uniforms in the flask burned down. Three couples flared up and burned down in an instant. Around the coats, three Red Army soldiers in felt boots ran and lamented: two drivers in sheepskin coats and one repairman in an overcoat over his naked body and all in hats with earflaps. They held belts, weapons and documents in their hands. Or they heated it too much, and most of all it was believed that the cause of the fire was the uniform of the repairman, soaked in diesel fuel, gasoline and oils. They loosened control and that's what they brought. They warned that uniforms soaked in oils and combustibles should not be put into a flask, but here they did it.

For a long time there was a rigmarole until these three were dressed in new linen and uniforms. The commander threatened to withhold from me the cost of the burnt. Hold on hold on. What was worse was that our offspring, which turned out to be so necessary and useful in these conditions, was compromised. Not only destroyed lice, but also warmed.

With the Red Army soldier Ozheshko, they introduced something new into the design. We decided to pour water on the bottom of the upper barrel, to make the grate higher. Disinfection and disinsection will be carried out with hot steam. This is perfectly acceptable and there is no danger of clothing catching fire. They reequipped it, but there were no people willing to try it for several days.

Today is the last day of 1942. A year and a half of the war has passed. We decided to get together, see off the old and meet the new, 1943. Manko is up to something there. There will be Sargsyan, Gen, Dyakov. Behind me - alcohol and a couple of loaves of white bread. It will be necessary to take from Lukyanov or ask the foreman. During the day it was not possible to run into the dugout - to warm up a little. Everywhere is cold, and the dinner did not warm. The new political officer dined in the barn from a bowler hat, like everyone else. Everyone noticed and approved it. He asked me if I was making a mistake by not sending the patient to the medical platoon. I told him I didn't.

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- What to do with him?

"Observe and educate," I replied.

We both smiled and patted each other on the shoulder.

I suggested that Manko invite the political officer to meet us for the New Year, but he reacted negatively to this, saying that he is a new person, he lives with the commander. It remains to be seen how he will react to this. Will succeed.

During dinner, the commander warned everyone not to start any shooting at midnight. Such an order from the head of the garrison. Separately, he strictly warned the commanders of platoons and squads.

We all had supper from the cauldron in the barn. There were the usual porridge with herring, tea, sugar, bread. After some discussion, we decided to invite a new political officer in the evening.

## Chapter Seven

LIQUIDATION OF "KOTL" (January 1 - February 4, 1943)

Friday, January 1, 1943 NEW YEAR 1943!

A new year has come, 1943. A little over a year and a half since the war has been going on. And where did the enemy go? Near the Volga, in the Caucasus...

Let the knife pass the heart, but hit other no less important vital organs: the liver, kidneys, spleen ... And the body is not only alive, but having absorbed the life-giving juices from its sources, straightened its shoulders, gained new strength not only to resist, to survive, but also win.

For a year and a half it was enough to reach the Volga. And then what? Surely this will end the enemy procession. This is where his downfall begins. Finally, the situation turned out in our favour. An attempt to help out his own near Stalingrad failed him. Moreover, they crushed Manstein's elite grouping and the 3rd Romanian army. Now the encircled grouping of Germans near Stalingrad is to be defeated, the outcome of which is beyond doubt. He can't get out of the cauldron. Our brigade will also participate in this operation. It is nice to know that such times have finally come and we are involved in this.

It's a good winter by our standards. And the frost is strong, and the snow is plentiful, and the sun is bright, but cold. Severe winter, familiar to us. It is good in felt boots - the feet are warm, but the body is cold. Short fur coats were issued only to drivers and parts of repairmen. It is impossible to stay outside in an overcoat for a long time - the frost quickly gets to the bones and breaks them. There are no warm apartments, and they are not waiting for us. In move,

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at work, the cold is more easily tolerated. They say that you can't get used to hunger, but bitter cold is a hard test. Our people, to some extent, are still accustomed to such weather, and in a good mood, the frosts are not so terrible. And people are in a good mood. Still would! We chase and finish off the enemy.

During breakfast, the commander and the new political commissar visited the place where the personnel ate near the kitchen. The commander congratulated everyone on the New Year and wished that 1943 would be the year of defeating the enemy. In response, discordantly, but cheerfully sounded: "Death to the enemy!", "Death to the German invaders!", "Give victory", "Victory, victory!". They retired to their heated cabin.

Had a good time last night. They parted way after midnight. Everyone brought something. The table was small - a post dug into the ground, with a lid on it. Not everything fit. They sat on the bunk, on the bench. They wanted to start the "Feast" just before the beginning of the new year, but Naumov could not stand it, began to insist that he pour it, and I poured the contents of my half-liter dish into eight mugs. Toasts began to the old year, so that all our troubles would remain in it, and, of course, to the victory.

Who talked about what. We started with world politics, about the allies, that they are prostitutes - they all wiggle with the opening of the second front, delaying it so that we are weakened by that time. We talked about the affairs of our front, about the brigade and our company. We went to our families - they are poor fellows, how hard it is for them. And of course, they did not bypass the women's issue in general and in particular. We raised a toast to make this new year 1943 the year of the expulsion of the German fascist invaders from our country. It was the cherished dream of each of us. They parted in the morning.

Before lunch I went to the medical platoon to congratulate my colleagues on the New Year. There was nothing to take with them for the women. Byashirov helped out. He gave me an unopened pack of trophy biscuits. Went at least not with

with empty hands. Shura Ladna, a nurse, was the first to meet in the medical platoon. congratulated her

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Happy New Year and presented a bag of biscuits, saying:

For all girls.

"Then let's go have some tea." I ask to our cell.

Thank you, Alexandra Batkovna. Allow me to congratulate the men on the New Year and in a couple of minutes I will come to you. For now, say hi to the ladies.

"Wait," she waved her hand to me and went into the annex, into the room in which the women.

The men sat in a room in one place: on two beds, stools, boxes. There were stretchers in the corner. On one stretcher were padded envelopes. They greeted me with exclamations of greeting - they were delighted with the new person. Gasan-Zade, Modzelevsky, Shepshelev, Ivanov, two Red Army soldiers were here - orderlies. It is evident that they were tipsy and talked about a lot. He congratulated everyone on the New Year and wished it to become the year of the end of the war.

- What gifts did you bring? Modzelevsky asked.

— And what did you bring? I asked him.

- Demand for alcohol, and put it on this table.

"I think that you will not persuade me to sign this demand," Hasan-Zade turned to me.

- I won't.

- Well done! Here you are learning! The most well done of all the good fellows. And it's not for nothing that I love him. Thank you. Wanted to rest. They came to me and took me by the throat. Sign, sign. They want me to disable them. Can I do it? No. Well done for supporting me. I hope you didn't bring the request for alcohol?

- No, I didn't think so. Although just in case prepared.

An explosion of laughter shook the house. Gasan-Zade did not laugh.

- Here! he pointed at me. - The same extortionist, like everyone else, only more cunning.

- How about without a gift? Modzelevsky turned to me again.

- He was carrying a gift, but he met women and gave it to them. Sweet, tasty - New Year's.

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— Learn! A real man, like we have in the Caucasus.

- Then I'll go to the girls, come with me to drink tea.

- Go alone. They are no longer of interest to us, they have become boring, - Shepshelev threw.

I went to the women. Nobody followed me.

- Here is the guest - the owner of the gift. Accept, - Shura met, and to me: - They were all exhausted from the desire to find out who sent us a gift.

There he found, besides Shura, Maya and Lyuba Bolshakova. The room was also filled up, but better heated. They rested, came to their senses after the experienced nightmare of hostilities. They rejoiced at the meeting that they were still alive, as they added - they are still alive. He congratulated everyone on the New Year, wished a speedy end to the war, stay alive, meet relatives, marry loved ones and do a purely woman's business - give birth to more children, who will be in great need after such a WAR.

Shura was the first to respond, saying that it would not be up to her, she would try in this sense. I unkindly thought that she would not succeed after such a round dance around her. They wished me to return to my relatives and also actively participate in replenishing the population of the country. Bolshakova put a jar of stewed meat, canned fish, crackers on the medicine box, poured a bowl of lukewarm water from the kettle to soak them. Smiling slyly, she set up a small vial of alcohol next to her, making excuses that there were no more, at least to symbolically celebrate the coming New Year. They suggested that I pour alcohol almost drop by drop into army mugs.

Each diluted with water at his discretion and after the toast they drank. They remembered the fallen colleagues and soldiers of the brigade, who found eternal refuge in the Volga region. They recalled the combat episodes of the last weeks, relatives and friends, about whose fate they knew little, lamented the fate of women at the front. drank boiling water with

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biscuits. This is how we celebrated the first day of the new year, 1943, with our colleagues.

Soon he began to say goodbye. I asked Maya to accompany me and take a walk at the same time, but she refused, said that she was tired and just wanted to lie down or "fall into the abyss, it was so sickening to the soul." She suddenly jumped up and waved her hand. "Wait! I'll take a walk, girls, I'll take a walk with the gentleman, after all, the new year has come! It's wrong to refuse. You can't do this on the first day of the new year - I'll still remain an old maid. Have you thought about it? Is your invitation still valid? she asked me theatrically. "I'm waiting for you," he answered, and in the style of a medieval knight he took off his hat and bowed in a long and deep bow. "If you please, wait for me at the porch," she continued in the same playful tone, pointing to the door, and added: "I'll dress warmly in my mink coat and go out." Once again I bowed to everyone. I heard the loud laughter of women after me. How to understand these creatures, unpredictable in emotions and actions?

Dr. Maya Vanshtein was under the weight of personal experiences: she did not know about the fate of her father and her friend from the institute.

...Waiting at the porch. Maya came to me

- Well, the winter is snowy, a real New Year's! Take me away for a short time to the snow carousel from all this nightmare: dressings, blood, human pain, suffering.

In front of me stood a head shorter than me with three cubes in his buttonholes, a senior lieutenant of the medical service in a cap with earflaps, an overcoat, pulled together by a belt, in felt boots. In all this there was a woman, God's creation, not created for war, but intended for life, its continuation, for joy and happiness.

How I wanted to take this woman away from the terrible reality. "Let's get out of here." - "Where and how?" "To the land of palm trees, bananas, citrus fruits and the warm sea." - "Agree. Right now - and after a short time: - Why

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shut up? What is the problem?" "Non-flying weather," I said sadly. A smile appeared on his face. She accepted this game. "What then?" - "Went". — "Where are you going?" An imp in the form of a sly and playful woman dressed in military uniform stared at me. Eyes... Unusual eyes. They smiled, and teased, and threw lightning ... What did they express? I am 19 years old, she is 24. What could I expect? I'm glad to be around. I tried to maintain a playful tone. "Let's go to the steppe tavern, my New Year's lady. My palace is far from here, but the tavern is somewhere nearby. There is music playing, and they will serve it to the table. And most importantly, we'll warm up and dance, Let's go?" - "Lead, my knight"

And we turned into an alley and went into the steppe past various types of military equipment, servicemen of all ranks, who accompanied us with a meaningful look and remarks. Soon before us opened the boundless steppe, covered with snowdrifts. Snow was falling in a thick mass and swirled around us in gusts in a whirlwind. Big light fluffs danced in front of us. Some of them fell down, and perhaps the same number went up. They teased, called us forward. We were fascinated by their game. Words cannot express the feelings that gripped us. Doctor Maya's face expressed admiration and surprise - the face of a child carried away by a wonderful fairy tale. We stopped. Maya extended her hand, and magical creations fell on the sleeve of her overcoat - snowflakes of various patterns. "Look, what a delight! Who makes them like this? She was staring straight at me. - Is it true? There is something amazing about all of this. I have never seen them like this. Who creates them? "Must be love. Love for beauty, happiness, and finally, for life. This is a reminder to people why they should live. They forgot about it, destroying each other. Maybe they will come to their senses when they see such beauty?" - "If it were so ... Let's shout across this steppe to the whole world: "People! Remember, stop! Stop this carnage! How beautiful and interesting is life, life itself, life, life.

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life!" I raised my voice with all my might. "Life, life, life," we shouted together into the endless steppe. "Life, life, life" echoed the cry of our souls to the whole world, which should not remain deaf to our calls. The cry of our souls was not a game. All this was serious. We hoped that we would be heard. Is there such a power on earth, is there a God in heaven, to which our prayer would reach and they would be able to stop the slaughter?! If there is, then they should hear us. We held hands and looked into each other's faces. We stood alone in the snow-covered steppe, under the thick falling snow that closed the village and the whole world from us.

Maya caught herself, admiration on her face: "Look, is it really great?" - she extended her palm, on which snowflakes lay and melted. Imperceptibly switched to "you", as it had happened before. "Really, everything is great! And the steppe, and snowflakes, and you, and that we are alone. Snowflakes fell on her eyelashes, cheeks and did not melt, they were completely held on them. I bent down to her face and turned the snowflakes into water droplets with my breath and tried to lick them off with my tongue and lips. Whether she took my touch as a kiss, I don't know, but she suddenly recoiled from me, some kind of fear appeared in her eyes, the charm of everyone around her disappeared. Put your hands out in front of you! "Don't, please." "What are you talking about, Maya? Switched to "you" again? - "I can not. I don't want you to see me as a woman. And you started treating me like a woman. We could be good friends." "It is strange that you could think so, and even in these conditions. I still don't know how to behave with your brother at all." - "Shut up! Excuse me, - she took my hands, stared at me with her eyes that were so warm for me, - excuse me, please. I always ruin everything. And now I have ruined the charm of such a walk, such a day - the first day of the new year. No one will be fine with me." "I will never forget how I thawed the snowflakes on your eyelashes and cheeks." "Don't, please, don't." - "You know

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I thought, when did the snowflakes melt on your eyelashes? - "What?" "Just as such beauty has turned into an ordinary droplet, so a person in this war at any moment can turn into ashes, into nothing. And our life as well. Have you thought about this?" "I thought about it many times. You feel sorry for yourself." "I didn't plan on melting snowflakes on your

eyelashes. It just suddenly came. It happened. And what charm was in all this ... "- Stop mocking!

Hands in two-finger military mittens clutched at the ends of my collar. The hat with earflaps slid back, black curls appeared on the forehead, cheeks were ruddy from frost, a perky smile, devils dance in the eyes ... Thick snow fell, snowflakes in gusts of wind were dancing, some of them fell on the shoulders of the overcoat, hat, eyebrows, eyelashes, on the fluff of the upper lip. The cubes on the buttonholes are no longer visible. We and the snow-covered steppe all around. I no longer knew where I was. Away from space and time. Floated in the clouds with Maya. A voice lowered me to the ground: "If I could reach your lips, I would kiss you." "I can bend down, I can kneel for your convenience," and I knelt down. "Get up, please, I beg you. It's not the same anymore. It turns out by order, not by impulse..." "As long as you wait for an impulse from you, we will both freeze. You are already freezing. Your chin and cheeks are covered with whitish spots in places. — "It is better to freeze in a charming fairy tale than to return to this bloody slaughter..." — "What if life is granted to us after this slaughter?" She quietly said: "I'm afraid to say anything..." I began to rub her cheeks, chin, and forehead with my palms. "We need to go back," and she ran away from me. And I went after him. They ran through the snowdrifts to the first houses of the village. Warmed up a little. We walked through the village to the medical platoon at a quick pace. "Thank you for the wonderful New Year's walk," she jumped up, kissed her on the cheek and jumped back, "it was very cool. I will remember for a century. "May God grant you a lifetime. Around people. In reply

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whole speculative. Didn't offend?" - "Offended," she replied, smiling, "offended by the absence of an action, which would not be a crime." Laughs... "Still, I keep myself from kissing back. Because people are looking at us." Military men of different ranks pass by, smile, greet, congratulate on the New Year, not skimping on remarks, sometimes very greasy, which is permissible for military people who have gone through and survived the hell of recent hostilities.

At this time, Dr. Maya stood with her bare palm outstretched, staring intently at the falling snowflakes and whispering softly. "What are you whispering?" "I wondered: will you and I be alive at the end of the battle?" - "And what happened?" - "It turned out that yes, you and I will stay alive! And it's not a sin to fix it with a kiss, publicly, on the first day of the new year, so that the prediction comes true. "And putting her hands on her shoulders, she reached out to my face and publicly kissed me on the lips. At the same time, she quietly said: "See you, my dear person, come, come more often! I will always be glad to see you." She waved her hand and disappeared behind the gate. There were exclamations of approval from the soldiers passing by: "Oh, baba! Lucky man!"

And the fairy tale flashed like a moment, leaving a deep imprint in my heart. And ahead is the continuation of the bloody battle and this whole damned war...

In front of a closed gate, behind which a person dear to me had just disappeared, I thought that happiness, in the full sense of the word, can only be given to one person by another person. Neither cubes, sleepers or rhombuses in buttonholes, nor position in society, nor wealth, nothing else in life gives what can be called in one word - love. Mutual love. I still can't imagine what Maya means to me. In this hell there is a ray of light and hope for happiness, if life is preserved - our life, as she wished. Perhaps, for the entire time of being at the front, for the first time I really wanted to stay alive, to love and

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to be loved. What a wonderful gift it is - life, God's gift, and how much it has depreciated now. People's lives are in the hands of the people themselves!

People, come to your senses! We are created for happiness and love, which are possible only in life. Don't destroy yourself!



Saturday, January 2, 1943 WE RECEIVE MILITARY EQUIPMENT.

Sheds are filled with wheeled vehicles, they received a batch of new ZIS-5s. Tank battalions received new T-34 tanks with crews. Most of our repairmen are sent directly to battalions and tank regiments to service equipment. All habitable premises are occupied. We are experiencing difficulties with water for cooking. She is missing in the village. At night and early in the morning, there are queues at the wells, and during the day they draw water with sand. I am responsible for its suitability for cooking. Bye

no suitable source was found.

In the afternoon, anti-aircraft guns suddenly started talking. Initially isolated, and soon there was an unimaginable barking. Anti-aircraft guns fired. Enemy transport planes were flying over us, accompanied by Messers. Inflating smoke balls of exploding anti-aircraft shells appeared in the sky, mainly behind passing aircraft. The latter passed without loss to the northeast. Our anti-aircraft defense did something wrong, letting such a large number of enemy planes through to Stalingrad.

Sunday, January 3, 1943 MEETING.

The brigade, like the entire army and the front, was preparing for battles to defeat the encircled German group near Stalingrad. Every day the brigade commander gathered the commanders of all units, including ours. We left

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to the settlement of Varvarovka - the area of the breakthrough by the enemy defense brigade. We got acquainted with the route of movement on the ground. Intelligence around the clock collected data on the enemy.

A very interesting meeting took place that night. Already lay down on the bunk. Kostya snored nearby and Nikolai snored. "Baby" and a Red Army soldier were sitting by the stove. Fedya Byashirov has not yet returned from the flight. At this time there was a very persistent knock on the door and stubbornly did not stop. Persistent voices were heard outside the door, swearing. We didn't open the door anymore. They called their own by their last name - then they opened it. Many parts passed by us, stopped in the village, looked for shelter. The knocking continued. The foreman did not answer for a long time, and finally asked:

- Who is he carrying?

— Open! Frozen. Let warm up! Your mother is like that.

- What do we do? the foreman asked. Last night, six people sat and dozed until morning, barely squeezed in around the stove. And on the bunk at our feet sat two.

"We must let them in, people must not freeze," I said.

"He wears them, the devil is here," the sergeant-major responded without malice and opened the door. A group of Red Army soldiers burst in, and with them clubs of frosty air. It immediately became ho-one.

More than three or four people will not fit. Where is everyone, cool the dugout, that's enough!

Six people in full gear squeezed in. The others moved away and the door closed. It became cold. Those who entered were placed around the stove, two sat on stools, the rest on the floor. The lantern was sooty, the dim light barely showed faces in the darkness. Those who entered took off their hats and unbuttoned their overcoats. Two were in coats. Must be commanders.

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"Excuse us, let's warm up and let's go," said one of them in a sheepskin coat. They threw off their sheepskin coats, and in the buttonholes of my tunic I made out cubes.

- Throw off your overcoats, - one of the commanders said to the others, - you will warm up faster.

The foreman put the kettle on the stove.

- Drink boiling water, you will warm up faster. Take crackers, sugar. There are also mugs on the table.

"Thank you, let's step back a bit," and they all continued to rub their faces and hands. They threw off the felt boots in turn and began to rub the toes and feet.

- How long did it take? the foreman asked.

- They left in the morning. They walked on foot, then on a wagon until you were stiff from the cold, and then they walked again. All hope for your feet.

- And still a long way to go!

- Thirty kilometers left. By noon you need to be in place, in the area of concentration.

Something seemed familiar to me okaya voice of one of the commanders. I got up on the bunk and looked around. It was Seryozha Belyakov, a classmate at the military medical school. That's the meeting! They were in the same department. There were three of them from Pskov and they kept very friendly, took care of me. All this flashed through my mind. I got down from the bunk, pulled out a box with our products and began to lay out canned food and bread on the table. Sergei stared at me, recognized or not?

"Snack," I said, smiling. He smiled too.

- Well, a meeting! Wow. Great! They didn't let me in, you sons of bitches. Could freeze at the threshold of a classmate. Well, great!

— Hello, Sergey! — we hugged, kissed. "Tell me how you got here. After all, he went to the air defense forces, but found himself, as I understood, in the infantry. [Where are the rest of the people of Pskov?

— I was in the air defense, then they transferred me to a rifle regiment and threw me here. Participated in the reflection of Manstein, and now

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abandoned to finish off the Germans in Stalingrad. We follow there. Perform in the morning.

- Wow, we went this way: we participated in the encirclement of the Germans near Stalingrad, they beat Manstein, and now they have thrown us here again. Kill the bastards.

What troops are you in?

— In the tank brigade. Senior military assistant of the technical support company.

- It's easier for you. Yes, you can live in the infantry. Military paramedic of the battalion. Two horses, carts. And yet it is very difficult - you have to stomp a lot.

- Where are the rest of the Pskovites?

- They were near Moscow, in Vyazma, in the air defense forces. It's easier to serve there. At one place. So they don't freeze like we do, and they don't wander.

- Well, where we do not. Who else knows what awaits whom and where... Alive, and thank God.

So we sat for tea, food and memories until the morning. I gave him everything that was edible for the journey. They seem to have had less food. Conducted him. At dawn the battalion set out on foot in a marching column into the snow-covered steppe. Several wagons closed the column. Next to one of them was Serezha Belyakov, the battalion's military paramedic.

Monday, January 4, 1943 LOST THE DUGMENT.

Trouble struck. We have taken the dugout. The Red Army soldier, who was guarding it and heating the stove, ran to Manko and said that some foreign commanders had ordered the dugout to be liberated and their Red Army soldiers were already taking our property out into the street. Manko ran there and saw that a sentry was standing by the dugout and almost all of our property was already on the street. Some captain told him that the commander of the rifle regiment would be stationed here. When Naumov and I ran up, everything was already in the street, and they were bringing in

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there were some boxes, suitcases, a telephone was installed. Manko was still swearing to himself, standing by the things. "I'm going to report to the company commander," I told him. "That yak of his will help, like a dead poultice," he waved his hand.

Tuesday, January 5, 1943 PREPARED FOR THE FINAL BATTLE.

Every morning the commander left for the brigade headquarters. There, they lost the upcoming hostilities in headquarters conditions in relation to their offensive zone. According to reconnaissance data, the enemy's firepower and defensive lines were taken into account. Interaction with neighbors was linked. Repeatedly traveled to the area of concentration directly to the front line. The beginning of the offensive was felt in everything.

Already without a senior and control, the processing of uniforms and linen was carried out in a wash churn. She drowned herself almost constantly for the sake of warmth, but like a stomp she was not inactive. Gained popularity. Many willingly used it - they were forced to. She acted reliably. With hot steam, she became safe, but the linen and uniforms turned out to be damp. After processing, I had to open the top cover for ten minutes, and then dry it near the stove. Being covered only with an overcoat or short fur coat, it was not very convenient in a cold barn, but they got rid of insects. The last one was worth the freeze. Those who came from long flights necessarily carried out the sanitization of linen and uniforms through our "unit". The Red Army soldier Ozheshko, the author of the invention, was especially proud of him. He made the grate higher above the surface of the water, and if the linen fell off the hooks, it did not get wet. He equipped a small platform with steps, which made it easier to load things. The unit has become my pride.

The brigade heard about the vosheboyka. Military assistant Modzelevsky and Dr. Gasan-Zade came to see.

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The doctor asked the company commander to make such a "unit" for them. Mikhailovsky promised at opportunities to do.

Wednesday, January 6, 1943 "SPATCH OF CHAMPAGNE...

In the morning I received dressings and medicines. A new woman appeared in the medical platoon - the wife of brigdoctor Jatiev, a military paramedic. Translated from somewhere. Tall, bright, fair-haired, dyed with peroxide, with three cubes in her buttonholes. I got acquainted. Her name is Nina, somewhat plump, about forty years old. It's great to have a woman next to you, a wife, even in such conditions. Or maybe it's bad if you really love. Only an egoist can expose a loved one to such dangers. There are no vacancies in the medical platoon. Somehow defined it. Shura introduced me to her as Maya's admirer. I become the butt of jokes

as I understand it, a tromootvod. And you have to come to terms with it. Here Maya passed by, nodded and didn't even come to us.

- Can I be an admirer after that? I pointed to her retreating figure.

- It's time to be not only an admirer, but also an eater. And you are all being modest," Shura persisted.

How do you eat this creature? This Madonna can only be admired.

"You admire it, and others will eat it," Shura said. We laughed.

Strongly swirled. There were snowdrifts, it was difficult to walk in felt boots. The frost weakened somewhat, but with a damp wind it made its way through.

After dinner, after finishing dressings and receiving patients, I decided to take a walk in search of a more full-flowing well. This morning, the porridge crunched with sand, somehow got away, but this can no longer be allowed to happen. I looked at a couple more wells in this area of the village, there were many parts around them, and found out that by breakfast they had already scooped out all the water.

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On the way back, it was already dusk. Passing by a house, I heard music. Strips of light were visible from the window, which was not completely darkened by the shutters, and the familiar melody of the tango "Champagne Splashes" was heard. I involuntarily stopped.

Before the war, I had a gramophone with a riveted-riveted spring and a dozen records. Among them were Champagne Splashes, and on the back of The Three Little Pigs, a fast dance, a popular foxtrot. In our class, only I had a gramophone, which made me "the first guy in the village." If any of the fellow practitioners had a birthday or other occasion, I was invited because of the gramophone, of course. With the consent of the parents, we gathered at the house of the birthday girl for tea with jam and a pie. Dancing was the highlight of the program, and the main guest was the gramophone. So, to this familiar tune, I returned to civilian life interrupted by the war. No matter how hard we lived, we remembered it like a wonderful fairy tale. I didn't even notice that I was covered in snow. My thoughts were interrupted by some old woman in a padded jacket, a downy scarf, from under which one could hardly see her face. Where did she come from here?

"What are you doing, son?

- Listening music. I also had a phonograph at home and the same record.

- Come into the house, warm up and listen.

- Can i?

"Of course you can, why not?

I followed her. She opened the gate, let me through and went to the porch. I swept the snow off my boots. She led me through the passage to a large room in which the military was stationed. He stopped at the threshold, took off his hat, and said hello.

- Here I was standing under the window and listening to music, all numb. Almost everything was covered with snow. She started to warm up, - she told everyone and turned to me: - Come in, take off your overcoat.

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I cleared my throat, said hello again, and began to retell the same story:

"I also had a gramophone at home and records exactly like this: "Champagne Splashes", "Three Little Pigs", and others," I tried to explain to them and shout over the music that was heard with the roaring laughter of "Three Little Pigs ..." I all still stood at the threshold, looking around. One big room. A kerosene lamp hung from the ceiling. To the right, a Russian stove was burning, and behind it stood a luxurious nickel-plated bed with lots of pillows. To the left of the threshold there is a pyramid of rifles, mortars, gas masks, overcoats and some other belongings piled up in a heap, and further on there is an iron single bed covered with a blanket. In the middle, closer to the windows, there was a large table on which stood a gramophone. Around the table on benches and stools sat Red Army soldiers, mostly elderly, and junior commanders.

The old woman, without undressing, left the room. A girl of about sixteen approached me.

- My name is Any, - she said and asked: - Do you dance?

"At school, I used to dance with friends of acquaintances," I answered.

- Shall we dance?

"Maybe," I muttered, "just like that?" - and I pointed to the overcoat, felt boots ...

- Take off your overcoat.

She threw off her felt boots, climbed into high-heeled shoes, came up to me and trustingly put her left hand on my shoulder, and her right hand in my palm.

The Red Army men twisted the spring of the gramophone, put the head on the beginning of the record. To the tune of "Champagne Splashes" we slowly began to dance. People parted, freed up more space for us to dance. Feet in felt boots were not very obedient, they had not yet moved away from the frost, but during the dance they began to move away, I felt that they were getting warmer. It became warmer and from clinging

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Luba to me. Her head was raised and her chin touched my neck. Her blond hair, scattered down her back, reached to my arm, which lay between her shoulder blades. She looked at me with blue, unsmiling, sad eyes.

The record ran out and someone put it back on and we kept on dancing. How did this school girl get here? What is this old lady to her? I decided to ask her about it.

— How did you get here? Civilians were evicted from here last year.

We lived in Stalingrad. Mom is a teacher. Father went to the militia. When the massive bombardment of the city began on August 23, my mother and I went down to the basement of the house, where we sat until the morning of the next day. Our house was destroyed by a bomb, and it was no longer possible to live in it. We picked up some of our winter things and went to the Volga in the hope of crossing to the left bank. We have relatives in Omsk, and we hoped to get to them. We were not allowed to cross. They were bombed, everything was burning around. A lot of troops, refugees, local residents accumulated. Neighbors from our entrance pushed through here for several days and could not cross. We were convinced that we would not be able to cross, and on foot we went here to my aunt. But her family was not found here. The house was boarded up. My mother and I stayed here to live. Fortunately, potatoes and something else were left in the cellar, otherwise they would have died of starvation. Soon we were captured by the Germans. Then our people were released, and for now we live here. Where to go? Somewhere the father is at war, if alive. We live in hope that he will find us.

So, in the dance, I learned her story. The melody was not interrupted, it was endless. I swam somewhere in the clouds, warmed up. The familiar melody, the proximity of Lyuba, the benevolent faces of the soldiers, the house -

took me away from reality. An old woman came in, threw down a bunch of firewood, took off her scarf, a padded jacket, and I saw another young woman of about thirty-five.

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- It turns out that you found a partner, Lyubushka. Dance, children, dance. The thing is young.

The melody had no end, as did the dance. I have been thinking for a long time that it is necessary to stop, but I could not be the first to decide. Finally, the melody stopped. They turned the record over to the other side, and there was a fast, foxtrot music and the song "Three Little Pigs". We began to dance the foxtrot. It took me one more time, after which I stopped. I was very hot. I was already wet. Footcloths in felt boots were lumped together, and I gave up, asked for mercy, rest. And Lyuba flushed all over, her eyes cheered up. We complimented each other, the Red Army soldiers applauded us, and I sat down on a stool and began to rewind footcloths. Lyuba's mother came in, brought in cast iron potatoes and put them in the oven.

"We'll eat boiled potatoes soon," she told me. I hurried and got dressed.

- Where are you, we will eat potatoes, sit down.

"I will come soon, I will definitely come. K. I need my own, and I'll tell you where I will be,

I ran to myself. It's already too late to sample the dinner. I hoped that somehow it would pass. In the barn I found the foreman, said that he had met acquaintances, and asked him for a loaf of bread and a can of canned food. He gave me. I ran back to this house. On the table steam was already steaming cast iron with boiled potatoes. There were cans of canned food, bread, onions. I added my own bread and preserves. They parted, and I sat down at the table. A senior lieutenant came in, apparently their commander, no longer young. He put the gas mask and tablet on the iron bed, put his overcoat there, put the belt with the pistol over his tunic and sat down at the table.

Some kind of alcoholic liquid was spilled. And I got a little - I refused more. I sat as if among my own, although I had never met these people. The military situation, harsh conditions quickly brought people together. It was some kind of mortar unit that

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days, like us, temporarily stopped here. And they are waiting for the next few days hot business.

After dinner, the gramophone was turned on again. They twisted the two sides of this one and only plate, which was preserved with them. And they were still dancing. It was an amazing evening of dancing to two tunes that sounded for a long time and alternately changed according to the mood and initiative of the dancers.

As soon as the sounds of tango were heard, the commander of this unit invited Lyuba. She looked at me and went to dance. The Red Army men moved the table and stools to the walls. At the end of the melody, the commander ceremoniously thanked Lyuba, told everyone: "Dance, and I'll smoke," threw a sheepskin coat over his shoulders and went out into the hallway. Someone turned up the gramophone, and the tango melody continued. The Red Army men went to dance with each other. For the most part in felt boots, some in boots, some skillfully, some clumsily, relaxed by dinner, alcohol, people were somehow distracted from the military and harsh reality, remembered the pre-war time, relatives and friends. They went out to smoke, some sat, talked, shared memories. Lyuba almost danced with everyone. Mom refused to dance, I got up several times when Lyuba invited me, but most of the evening I talked with Lyuba's mother, the Red Army soldiers. The melody, accompanied by laughter, was liked by everyone, it caused tenderness on the faces and smiles of those present at each performance. And they played it, only in my presence, maybe more than a dozen times.

As much as I wanted to, I had to leave. He thanked the hostess and began to put on his overcoat. The hostess asked where I was staying and if it was comfortable to sleep there. He said that they slept in a dugout, but the authorities took it away from the larger one, and had to sleep last night in the barn on a stretcher - it was cold ALL NIGHT.

- Stay with us for the night.

"You have nowhere and so many people.

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"Stay, we'll settle down somehow, but you'll be warm."

"Stay," Lyuba joined in.

I did not force them to beg myself for a long time and said:

- Thank you, I'll be there. I will only tell you where I will be, so that they can find me if I am suddenly needed. You never know.

"Come, son, we'll arrange it."

I ran into the darkness of the night to myself. There was no other thought how to return to these people. I met the foreman of the transport platoon "Kroshka" and told him that I was staying overnight with friends, asked him to go see where this house was. Just in case I need it urgently.

And the foreman and I went to the house of my friends.

- Are there women? - he asked.

- Yes, mother and daughter, and a full house of Red Army soldiers.

"Mom, anything else?"

"A mother is like a mother," I answered, not realizing what he was talking about.

"Maybe I can find a place there next to one of them," he asked with a sly smile.

"No, foreman, there can be no talk of that," it began to dawn on me, "there is only one room and it is full of people, I don't even know where they will put me."

- Okay, figure it out there, and tomorrow we'll go in together. I wish you success.

- What success there, at least in the warmth to sit out.

Nowhere was locked in this house. In the dark passage, by touch, I found the door to the room, opened it. The wick of the lamp was screwed on, but he saw that the whole floor was occupied by people lying down. The hostess got out from under the covers, came up to me, took me by the hand and led me to the bed where she and her daughter were lying. Heard her whisper:

"I thought you weren't coming. Undress, put your clothes on a stool. You will sleep with us.

— How so?! I'm on the floor...

- Don't talk, strip down to your underwear and lie down.

I stripped down to my underwear and put my clothes on a stool by the bed. She stood beside me while she undressed, then she took my hand, crawled under the covers and pulled me.

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- Lie down and sleep.

Lyuba moved to the wall, mother in the middle of the bed, I was on the edge.

I did not have time to figure out how I fell into a soft warm bed, found myself covered with a light duvet and, the most incredible thing that I could not even imagine, was lying next to a woman and her daughter. He lay on his back and did not breathe - he caught his breath. I feel that I am suffocating, there was not enough air, and I had to take deep breaths at intervals.

"Calm down and sleep," said the mother.

My back and leg muscles began to hurt from stiffness and tension. Perhaps I was already breathing, and there was enough air, but I did not dare to turn around or pull up my leg, for fear of hurting the hostess or waking her up. I couldn't sleep for a long time. Various snores, groans, and cries of tired people who fell into an anxious sleep in uncomfortable positions, in clothes, were heard around, and, perhaps, it was one of their more successful overnight stays in warmth, in these winter front-line conditions. After a while, I heard the sniffing of a sleeping woman nearby. From time to time she moaned, said something through her sleep. Love was not heard. Apparently, from the very beginning she fell asleep peacefully.

He must have fallen asleep. Perhaps, even in a dream, I felt a breath above me and a gaze penetrating me. Someone very carefully opened my eyes with his fingers, and met with big blue eyes looking at me point-blank. It seemed that I was dreaming, but suddenly I remembered everything. He looked around: there were no more Red Army soldiers, daylight was breaking through the shutters in strips. It must have been morning long ago. I overslept to sample breakfast. I lie in a snow-white downy bed next to a girl staring at me:

"Sonya, it's time to get up," and seeing my surprise, confusion, she burst into loud, direct childish laughter, which she had not heard for a long time, and through laughter about

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she said: "I fell asleep like at my mother's house ... I decided to sleep all day ... Maybe they are already looking for you ...

I jumped up in my drawstring soldier's underwear and began to dress quickly. It was difficult to get into warm underwear and tie all the ties that were instead of buttons, both at the waist in front and at the bottom at the feet.

- Where are you going? Lie still. What were you afraid of? Anyway, I was late for all sorts of constructions there.

- What are the structures now? Where are the Red Army?

- They left. Didn't hear?

"No, maybe ours have left too," and I continued to dress hastily. The ties could not be tied. Once dressed and threw:

"Thank you," and he ran to the door, stopped and looked around. She sat curled up under the covers. Blond hair is beautifully disheveled. I returned, kissed her on the forehead, eyes, said on the go:

"Tell my mother a big thank you, I'll be back again, I'll definitely be back, if possible," and hastily left the house.

Thursday 7/January 1943 WHAT IS LOVE?

It was another January day. All around it swept over the night, and the blizzard continued. From the porch to the gate, and from the gate to the road, a fresh path was dug in the snow, losing its outlines under



falling snow. In some houses, snowdrifts reached the windows. It was possible to walk in the middle of the street, and in some places felt boots fell down to the knees. Sharp gusts of wind burned his face. The neck and chin were especially cold. But he did not react to the cold, his mood was upbeat. I even wanted to sing. But it was out of place. The street is crammed with military units and equipment. I came to my senses a little when I felt a sharp pain in the chin and cheeks. The frost was somewhere over twenty degrees.

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I came to the location, went into the barn, where the kitchen was. Breakfast has been out for a long time. I wanted to eat. Asked the chef

— Is everything okay?

"If they don't shoot, then it's normal," Kharitonov answered and asked:

— [Did you eat somewhere or will you eat here?

- What's left?

- We'll find it.

From a thermos, he put still warm porridge into an aluminum bowl, gave a loaf of frozen bread and his own spoon, which he pulled out of his felt boot.

- There is no more tea. The boilers were washed, the kitchens ran on water.

I was sitting in the barn on the bunk in my greatcoat and hat near the heating barrel-stove and ate porridge with thawed bread. I have not yet departed from yesterday evening, night and morning. All of this kaleidoscope moved in memory.

Did I see a beautiful fairy tale in a dream? Endless tango, Lyuba, her mother and downy bed... All this was real. Fairy tale in life! And in what kind of life ... And in a dream you won't dream.

I came to my senses, made a detour of the territory, a koshar where equipment was being repaired. Met Gene.

- Alive? Manko asked about you, he says that he disappeared somewhere. Didn't sleep in the barn.

- Was. Stayed overnight with friends. Met here.

- Where do you know your friends from? What are you thinking.

— Found. I'll tell you later, - and went to the location of the transport platoon to Manko.

- Where did you disappear to? Thought it was frozen somewhere.

- Warmed up like never before in my life. What is there, what news, was the commander looking for me?

No, I didn't. And where have you been?

"I don't even know what to say. Fairy tale and nothing more. And he danced to the gramophone all evening, and had dinner, and slept in a luxurious bed.

- With whom?

- With mother and daughter.

- What?

Manko opened his Mongoloid eyes and mouth wide.

Yes, it's true, Kolya. Although I don't quite believe it was. It seems that I saw a beautiful fairy tale in the cinema and I participated in it.

- That yak is his son, I don't understand anything. Have you lost your mind?

- And I do not understand. Give me a can of food. I go to NIM.

- Take what you need. At least show me where you'll be. We can leave any hour. [where to look for you?

"I'll show you, we'll go after dinner." Now I will do the dressings, they are already waiting for me.

I went to the barn, where the sick and those in need of dressings were already gathering.

After dinner I went to my friends. The day before, I warned Manko that the foreman "Kroshka" knew where this house was located, and in which case he could be sent for me. The yard and the house were full of new soldiers from another part. Mortars, boxes of ammunition were stacked in the passage, rifles stood in a pyramid.

"We already have new ones," Lyuba met me, "and the bunk will be for you." Mom warned that the doctor was standing here and slept last night.

- Thank you.

- There was no catching up?

— No, everything worked out. I will go. I'll be there tonight or earlier if I can.

"It'll be evening soon, it's getting dark," Lyuba said.

- This is for mom, for you, - I laid out a loaf of bread, canned food, several packs of concentrates, sugar and salt from my bag - everything that I managed to get from my colleagues, - where is mom?

- I went to the end of the village, to my friends. Coming soon. Don't leave.

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"We need to take a sample from dinner and find out about the plans for the night. I'll try to free myself soon and come, - I left.

During dinner, the commander announced that the repairmen would work all night. By morning, all the vehicles of the units must be repaired and sent to them. He ordered many specialists from other squads and platoons to help the repairmen. Decided to go spend the night with friends. Nobody asked for leave. I warned the foreman "Baby" that I would spend the night in the same place as the previous night. I remembered that my underwear was far from fresh, and only the devil knows what is found in it. The day before, I did not have time to change clothes, I did not expect that I would find myself in such a situation. I went to the foreman and told him that I needed to put on clean underwear.

- Right now?

- Yes now.

- Somewhere lies in bags, whoever finds it there.

— It is necessary, comrade foreman.

"Are you going down the aisle?"

- Anything is possible.

"On this occasion, let's go look for it," he said, scratching the back of his head. I went behind the partition, where the property of the household platoon lay. He took out a bag and pulled out clean, warm underwear.

What about plain underwear?

- You can find Ge here, one warm one is enough.

I changed my clothes in the barn, shivering from the cold. I gave him the old one.

- Will you take me with you?

Nowhere, it's full of people. They put me on the bed. I slept with them, so I decided to put on new underwear, or rather clean ones. Although he slept in a dubious one.

— Come on, doctor! Did you sleep with your mother or your daughter?

- With mom.

- Well, me to my daughter. Will it go?

I stood in confusion. Is he joking or serious? Where to put it? I think that the bed is out of the question. And they won't put me down either. They said the bed was for me.

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- Nowhere, comrade foreman, do not be offended, I cannot take you there.

- Okay, greedy, use it while you're lucky.

I went back to my friends. Their dinner was over. The hostess invited me to the table, but I refused, saying that I had already had dinner. The gramophone was not turned on that evening.

The whole room was packed with people. They began to lie side by side on the floor.

The hostess unfolded the blanket on the iron bunk, spread a sheet on the mattress, put a pillow and offered me to settle down for the night. He undressed to his linen and crawled under the covers. The mesh and mattress creaked under my weight. Having finished their business in the utility kitchen in the hallway, mother and Lyuba went into the house. One of them screwed on the wick of the lamp, and they went to bed on their bed, which I knew from last night.

Sleep quickly began to take over people who were tired of military affairs, warmed up in a heated hut, and spent most of the day in the cold. Many were already snoring. Sleep didn't take me. Various thoughts were running through my head...

Stepping over people sleeping on the floor, Lyuba came to me and crawled under the covers.

"I'll stay with you a little," she said in a whisper, and clung to me.

The netting of the bed with a terrible creak sank even more under us, and Lyuba almost completely rolled down on top of me. The bed creaked at the slightest movement, and we did not dare to move.

For the first time in my life, I was lying with a girl like this in bed, and even in such unimaginable surroundings. Time passed, and we continued to quietly lie in an embrace. The new strings from two pairs of underpants cut painfully into the lower third of the shins, evidently tied them tightly, and also dug knots into the skin on the stomach of the string of the fly from the weight of Lyubin's body. Afraid of the creak, I did not dare

untie them. The pain in the legs became unbearable, she took a dominant position in this situation, all thoughts were about how they

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untie. Already neglecting the creaking, he pulled up his legs alternately one after the other and with great difficulty untied the strings. How easy it became for my feet and my soul, although I was crushed by Lyuba's body. After all, it began to reach me that it was time to make love somehow. He hugged her tighter, pressed her to him, kissed her eyes, forehead, hair. I tried to lie down more comfortably, and the mesh, for the umpteenth time, creaked treacherously. We were not alone in the room and alone at the same time. I understood that no one cares about us, and at the same time it seemed that everyone was listening to us warily. Surely everyone was already asleep: snoring, sniffing, groans of deadly sleeping people were heard around. But the mother, it seemed, could not sleep, and expected that she was about to drag Lyuba out of bed and make a scandal at the same time. I don't know how long hesitation and speculation would have overcome me, and would have lain motionless until Lyuba began to show herself in bed as an experienced housewife, and I was forced to remain a timid lodger. She expertly helped me to prove myself, and I tried to justify her efforts, yet under the pressure of a restraining environment. I began to understand that she had already grasped this science well before me. I don't know how correctly I behaved, whether everything turned out well - I didn't have the courage to ask.

For the first time, something unusual and important happened to me in my life, which should have happened sometime between a man and a woman. For a long time, without words and movements, they lay in an embrace among the snoring and groans of people sleeping around. Her head lay on my chest, neck. At some point, she slipped out of my arms and went to bed with her mother. I could not fall asleep until the morning - sleep did not come, I assessed what had happened. Apparently, he didn't take a nap. Maybe he was asleep, and it was all a dream. But no. Still, something happened. And is this love? There was nothing sublime, romantic. Something thievish, unclean, even shameful. Only in novels they write about love, although what do I know about it ... Is it possible to judge by one

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tea? And what about the relationship between Dr. Lozhkina and the brigade commander? It was love? May be. And what about Shura's almost trouble-free behavior? Once she said that she felt sorry for the boys. Or personal insatiability? All this is far from love. Lyuba has something in common with her. Some underlying thought suggests that he will go the same way. If we talk about love, then, apparently, you need to get used to, become attached to, feel that you cannot live without each other, and everything else would turn out by itself, as "the crown of relations between a man and a woman", as I read it somewhere. This must be what love is. With Maya, it would not have happened so immediately for me. Yes, I had no idea.

I remembered Ivanhoe and other literary heroes. I prefer this type of relationship.

Thoughts were interrupted by awakening people. I saw my mother get up, get dressed and leave the house. She brought firewood and lit the stove. People started to get up. And I got up, got dressed, made the bed with a blanket. Everyone left the house. I also had to go to my room, have time to take a sample of breakfast, find out about our immediate plans. How can I leave, how can I say goodbye? Went to the bed. Lyuba snored in her sleep, covered with a duvet almost to her head. I unfolded the blanket and kissed her on the forehead. She, without opening her eyes, stretched out her arms, grabbed my head, pulled me to her and dug into my lips. He began to choke, pulled away with difficulty, unhooked her hands at the back of her head, threatened her with his finger, and left the house.

Friday, \$ January 1943 MARCH 8".

I learned that the units of the brigade had gone to a new area of concentration, closer to the place of the upcoming military operations. Some of the faulty equipment was left with us: wheeled vehicles and two tanks, which should be repaired today.

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Ahead march, fights. The enemy, surrounded at Stalingrad, does not surrender, stubbornly resists and fetters large groups of our troops. It must be broken. This promises us considerable losses. We do not receive new equipment, there is a large shortage in personnel. The situation is the same in other nearby operating units and formations that have come out of combat. Rumor has it that the Germans have created strong defense areas, they are still well armed. What do we expect? For enthusiasm? It's a pity to lose our people here. Maybe the Germans are capitulating?

Before lunch I ran to my friends, told them that they should leave from one hour to the next, that the bulk of our unit had already left.

The gramophone was on the window. I looked at him sadly, and so did Lyuba. He distracted me from reality for some time, brought me back home, to school, to my childhood friends, brought me to Lyuba. We were all silent, each thinking about his own. Somehow the love faded. I knew that this girl-woman would go down in my memory for the rest of my life, but I just won't breathe it in... Has she become close to me, dear? Close perhaps, but I can not say that my own. Still, he considered himself indebted to these people, and it would be unfair to leave them like this. They treated me incredibly well, and it seemed that I should somehow repay the same, contact this family, if not now, then leave some threads that bind us.

[Where could I find you if I stay alive?

"I don't know," answered Lyuba, "in Stalingrad our house was destroyed, but where we will be, I don't know." Take our Stalingrad address.

Lyuba wrote down the address in a notebook, tore out the sheet and handed it to me. I put it in the breast pocket of my tunic.

"To stay alive and return to my relatives," Luba's mother wished me.

Thanks for the warmth and kindness. I won't forget you. I wish you a meeting with your husband and with your father, Lyuba. Thank you.

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And with a heavy soul I got up and backed towards the door. Mother got up, kissed me three times on the cheeks, according to the Russian custom, and said:

"Go, so that God saves you," and she crossed me. I offered my hand to Lyuba in parting, she stretched and kissed me.

In the morning they began to pull the remaining transport into the marching column. Until dawn, some were freezing in the cabs, some were dancing around the cars under the moon. We left when it was already light. Ahead is the last stage of the Battle of Stalingrad.

Saturday, January 9, 1943 Varvarovka.

After several halts, we stopped on the outskirts of the village of Varvarovka, where we must settle down for a while. The houses and yards were filled with troops. Our vehicles with ammunition and fuel left the village and settled in a gully. There was a lot of snow around, there were snowdrifts, especially in the beam. Most of the warriors were on the street. Cars got stuck in snowdrifts, and people pushed them every now and then, some took them in tow with a tractor. The people were on the move all the time, and this saved them from freezing, although many of them had their chins, cheeks, and fingers "grabbed".

Ours found leaflets of different colors in German, scattered in the snow. They printed an appeal from our command to the Germans about complete surrender. They offered captivity, saving lives, food, medical care, and returning to their homeland after the war. If they had accepted the surrender, how many of our lives would have been saved, and even German ones.

The Germans will be destroyed, possibly completely, if they do not agree to capitulate. They will not be spared for everything they have done to our people. Retribution is just in relation to such bloody invaders in many ways more than the simple sound of the well-known aphorism: "If the enemy does not surrender, he is destroyed!" They are still guaranteed

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not only life, but also food, treatment, return home at the expense of our people. True, it will save many of our lives. Appeal to the enemy about capitulation is humane, just. It's up to the German command, to Hitler. It is up to them to decide, not a simple soldier. Hitler will not go for it. There will be fierce battles for extermination. Fuhrers in different centuries of history baked on words about the good of their peoples and at the same time ruthlessly destroyed them in the name of their ambitions or religious dogmas.

Before lunch, the company commander read out to us the order of the Deputy Commander of the 57th Army: "The 254th Tank Brigade should concentrate in the Varvarovka area by 06.00 9.01.1943 and by 07.00 10.01. consisting of the 189th tank regiment, a motorized rifle machine-gun battalion and a command and control company. Have the 1st and 2nd tank battalions in combat reserve. The brigade will operate at the junction of the 422nd and 38th rifle divisions, interacting with them. Breakthrough of the enemy's defensive line at the line with a mark of 111.6 and 97.5".

The technical support company was ordered to deploy repair shops after the tank brigade left, at the location of the 189th tank regiment.

Apparently, the Germans did not accept the surrender. Fights are coming. With the onset of darkness, our column moved to the opposite outskirts of the village, and we began to place ourselves in the place of our 189th tank regiment that had left. Many other units also left to the north.

Sunday, January 10, 1943 THE LIQUIDATION OF THE "RING" BEGINNING.

From the form of the 254th tank brigade: "By the beginning of the breakthrough of the enemy's defensive lines, the 254th tank brigade had 32 T-34 tanks in the 189th tank regiment, consisting of three tank companies. The motorized rifle machine gun battalion has 2 T-26 tanks and 1 T-60 tank. In the 1st and 2nd rifle companies, tank-landing company, mortar battery

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there were 327 people. The combat reserve consisted of the 1st and 2nd tank battalions, which had 2 T-34 tanks, 2 T-26 tanks, 1 T-60 tank and 1 T-70 tank. The brigade also included a command and control company and a technical support company".

That night they did not close their eyes - they set up repair shops, deployed personnel. People settled in the houses that our tankmen liberated.

I was given a house for the first-aid post from one heated room. The remains of a shed in the yard were dismantled for firewood, the fence was no longer there - they burned it.

In the morning, during breakfast, we heard volleys of guns and mortars. Somewhat later, more deaf bombing strikes began to be heard. Began! The air trembled, and the earth turned upside down, and everything that was on it was mixed up. Above us was the whistle of flying shells, the rumble of aircraft. The cannonade continued for about an hour, and then all was quiet. If you listened carefully, you could distinguish rarer artillery fire, automatic and machine-gun trills. Long before that, our medical platoon left for their battle formations.

At noon, we learned from the drivers who delivered ammunition and fuel to the front line that ours had hardly advanced and were suffering heavy losses. We were sure that the hourly artillery preparation would turn and sweep away the enemy's defensive lines and ours would successfully go on the offensive.

Our hopes did not come true. As if artillery preparation was carried out on false targets - the enemy's defense did not break. The Germans well fortified the occupied lines, organized areas of all-round defense. They shot at objects and points in front of them, and their fire was very massive, incapacitating our soldiers and equipment.

The tanks moved at high speeds at the junction of the 57th and 64th armies, but were stopped, some of them were lost, the rest retreated to the initial line of attack. There was no way to break through the beam. Snipers, submachine gunners

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put our people out of action. Several tanks were on fire on the battlefield. Disappointing received lead.

Another group of repairmen of armored vehicles and wheeled vehicles left for the battlefield. Sargsyan, Gen, Naumov, Kruglyakov and others left with flying cars and airborne vehicles. This day has been very troubling.

I took Yakov Zarubin as an assistant driver. He helped heat the room in the house, and it was more fun together. Manko also settled in a separate house. That made him feel more comfortable. Patients came to me all day, mostly with colds and for bandaging with minor injuries, frostbite.

Zarubin was better known as Yasha. That's what everyone called him. Good driver, efficient, trouble-free. His car was always in good condition. He lived in isolation, spoke little. It was imperceptible that he became friends with someone - he treated everyone evenly and respectfully. I recently sprained my leg and sprained my ankle ligaments. I haven't traveled on flights yet - I couldn't pull the boot on my leg. The whole day he stoked the stove, carried chopped firewood. In the evening he insisted on tea with the addition of some twigs, the bark of shrubs. The kettle of boiling water stood on the stove until it drowned.

After tea, he opened his soul to me, and we talked until late. He said that he needed to get wounded, as he put it, "in a combat operation," and he wanted to stay alive, or whatever it would be, but he didn't want to remain a cripple. It was very important for him, as he repeatedly stated during dressings, to get wounded in the war. I was surprised by the categorical nature of such an unusual desire.

"After all, I am from a family dispossessed by the Soviet authorities," he began. "My family and I were listed as enemies of the people. At best, I am the son of an enemy of the people. This matter does not change the essence. Before the war, I was not admitted to the Forestry Technical School. And I was called to the war to protect my fatherland, the Soviet government, which considers me an enemy. Not

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less than others I want victory over the enemy, for which I will not spare my life, but I cannot die as the son of an enemy of the people until this label is removed from all members of my family. A criminal can atone for his guilt with blood, and his conviction is expunged, but for me there is no such possibility. In a word, an enemy and forever. And now I live with this burden. This is a very difficult burden. She not only in her thoughts, but also left a certain imprint on her behavior. I have to check every step, I'm always out of my element, I'm constrained, I'm just waiting for what they will say: "You are the son of an enemy of the people and not on the way with us ... You can't be entrusted with this, you can't be trusted .. ." They gave me a machine gun, and what if they take it away? They shouldn't, he answered himself. — The higher authorities there in the brigade know who I am. It is written about this in the questionnaires, and the organs are handed over after everything, wherever they transfer me. That's what you know about me. I would like to keep this between us.

- Where do you come from?

- They lived in the Smolensk region, near Roslavl. There were eight of us in the family. In addition to our parents, grandfather and grandmother, we had children - three brothers and a daughter-in-law - the wife of an older brother. We were dispossessed in 1930. I, the youngest in the family, was fourteen. Everyone worked on the ground. His land was about ten acres. They rented twenty from the state. The whole family worked. During the season, our own uncle and his wife also helped us. He worked on the railroad. There was also an apiary. They had a couple of horses, a cow and a heifer. There were chickens. Near the house there is a garden. They had their own apples, cherries, plums, and currants. We lived well, but worked hard as a family. They paid taxes to the state, and left for themselves. Almost nothing was sold from the garden - it went to itself. True, honey was sold. They were considered middle peasants, prosperous middle peasants. They did not join the collective farm in the first wave. Grandfather was the head of the family and categorically refused. He had no idea how to give what he had earned by his labor to the general use. At first they did not touch us, when the dispossession of the kulaks began with the second run, they arrested my father,

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They kept him in prison for two months and released him because he promised to join the collective farm. My father understood that if he did not join the collective farm, everything would be taken away. He gave one horse, a heifer and five beehives to his uncle. And with the rest of the farm he joined the collective farm. Grandfather did not agree, but there was nowhere to go, and he realized that they would be dispossessed if we did not join. And when they found out that his father had given part of the farm to his uncle, he was arrested a second time, they accused him of hiding part of the property from the collective farm, and dispossessed him of the kulaks. All have been selected. It was a pity for the family to give everything to the collective farm, acquired with sweat and blood. And in this acquired there was also the share of my own uncle, who helped us. Many entered the collective farm without anything, they didn't even have horses and without cows, but everything became common. It was immediately clear that our family would not be better off on the collective farm. Father and grandfather did not understand why they should go to the collective farm when the family would not be better for it. And this was the mistake of my parents, and it had a heavy impact on the fate of the whole family. And not only on us alone. Thousands, hundreds of thousands, maybe millions. Who will sow the grain? How will the country be fed without us peasants?

- Where were you evicted?

- In the Trans-Urals, for logging. They took almost nothing with them - they were not allowed. They did it overnight, at night, they seized some clothes and some of the dishes. At first it was very difficult. Unaccustomed work in the most difficult conditions. In winter, terrible cold, and in summer, mosquitoes - midges, maybe worse than the cold was. They were placed in barracks. There were no warm clothes. Gradually acquired, began to get used to. It was very disappointing that the whole working family was considered an enemy of the people. You can't get used to it. They got involved in the work, worked at the logging site. Our family is used to hard work, and any work feeds. They built a dugout for the family and left the barracks. All the elders missed the earth very much. Grandfather was especially sad. He was still strong, but soon died of longing. The grandmother did not live long either. There they were buried. The father was crippled - he broke his leg at the logging site. When he began to walk, the rest of the family decided to go to the ground. After long

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ordeals were allowed to leave for Northern Kazakhstan. There the whole family was attached to the collective farm. For three years they settled down and began to live well. The second brother got married. At the beginning of the war, the brothers were taken into the army, they are fighting somewhere. And they took me. My father is a foreman on a collective farm, he raised grain production and enjoys great prestige. They didn't join the army. Armor or because the cripple - the leg has become shorter, lame. Their daughters-in-law and their children stayed with them.

- What kind of enemies of the people are you? — burst out of me.

"They are like that... I keep thinking why we were dispossessed when we worked honestly and well for ourselves and the state. We did not exploit anyone, we only invested our own labor. There were many people like us, dispossessed, and many were poorer than us.

I got the impression that they dispossessed those who did not pay taxes and hid grain from the state. Who had laborers. This is how I imagined the kulak: fat, brutalized, on which



other peasants bent their backs, as they portrayed him on posters. But Yasha and his parents, as he presented them, did not fit into the image of a fist, especially as enemies of the people.

- Why are you injured? I wondered.

- I would like to hope that this will put me on a par with other Soviet people. I would like to think that this will happen if I suffer in the defense of the Motherland.

- What are you doing? Not responsible for parents. And nothing separates you from others.

"Maybe, in fact, it doesn't make any difference, but in practical life it does. I'm marked. I was not accepted to the forestry technical school. The reason is the son of a fist. I would not have been admitted to other educational institutions. Will this stain remain after the war? In general, it is very difficult to live like this. I can't be friends with anyone. It is not always appropriate to say who I am, and if he finds out himself, he will not forgive me, maybe I will ruin someone's career. What if I accidentally do something? Everything will be fine for another, but it seems to me that any step I take can be misinterpreted, and I have to look back at

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my every action, every word. It is very difficult to feel inferiority among others all the time.

"You painfully exaggerate your position. Feel equal, like everyone else. You are no worse than others in work and discipline. And there is no point in executing yourself alive. Get all that nonsense out of your head.

"It is necessary to survive what we experienced, in my shoes, to be uprooted from the land that nourished me and thrown into the taiga to feed the midges, to endure humiliation, insults, anxiety for loved ones, resentment against fate or Soviet power ... In Our family believes that these were the intrigues of envious people, loafers who did not like to work. We never thought badly of the Soviet power. Stalin, probably, at first did not know what was happening in the localities, because later he condemned the local leaders for the wrong dispossession of the middle peasants. Having survived all this, you can understand me, people like me. The worst thing is that we still do not understand why we had such a fate.

- After the war, all this will be forgotten, everyone will be equal. In a socialist state, people will be judged by their work. By work there will be honor.

- The tragedy of my family was that we worked well.

There could be mistakes and excesses in our life. The main thing is to stop and defeat the enemy. After such a war, people will be different, and laws will be different. Everyone will respect and protect each other. After all, so many of our people have died and how many more troubles await us.

"I would like to believe that everything will change for the better. So I think that I need to wash off with my blood the stain of the son of an enemy of the people, the son of the dispossessed. And there is no certainty in this. True, they were drafted into the army. My brothers and I are fighting like all other Soviet people. Maybe they will take this into account, they should take it into account. When he was drafted into the army, he asked to be a machine gunner, but they said that drivers were needed. They see better. I need to be better than all other Soviet people in life. I really hope that the war will wash away this stain.

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He paused, thought, and then added:

Don't think that the authorities don't know about it. So far no one has said anything to me in the brigade. Come on, I took it and shared it with you. I wish no one talked about this.

I promised not to tell anyone about our conversation. Can I judge this correctly? The authorities knew what they were doing. Apparently, there were some reasons. Although the fate of many people could not develop according to their deeds. After his confession, we lay silent for a long time. Everyone had something to think about. Soon Yasha began to sniffle. I looked at him in the glow of a burning stove. And I felt sorry for this guy. I did not think that so much grief could fall on the lot of good, honest, hardworking people. From the bottom of my heart I wished him a happy share, and if injured, then a light one. Maybe he really needs it.

Monday, January 11, 1943 BY THE CHERVLENAYA RIVER.

Our brigade fought hard battles with the enemy. No forward movement. The enemy stubbornly resisted.

In the group of senior military technician Drozd, one repairman was killed. The medical platoon is overloaded with wounded. The brigade tramples along the Chervlenaya River in the direction of Tsybenko. So far without success. All this was told by Naumov, who arrived for spare parts for road transport. He said that in the brigade on the front line for two days they had been giving out one hundred grams of vodka. I am outraged that the repairmen were not included in any lists, they were not attached anywhere. They sit on dry rations. There is no time and nowhere to cook - they are starving. Sometimes they ask for something hot from the kitchen of some battalion. I went to our new political officer and told him that our repairmen on the front lines were starving, at least without hot food in such a cold, and offered to get them put on allowance in one of our battalions. He took me to the commander.

What's new, doctor?

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- They say that the repairmen are starving on the front lines, without hot food for two days.

- Everyone received a dry ration.

"But there are no conditions for cooking, and there is no time for this. They work in the cold. It's bad without hot food, - I noticed.

- Will you order them to carry food in thermoses?

- I can't order. I can only suggest.

- What?

"We need to put our people on allowance in one of our nearest battalions.

"And the dry rations they were given?"

- Issued for four days on the thirteenth of January. Now we need to come to an agreement that they will be put on allowance, and the remaining dry ration will be as an emergency reserve - just in case.

- Eaten without any chance.

- Well, let. People are dying, and is it worth it to waste time on trifles? Naumov also said that they give out vodka to everyone there, and our secondees just lick their lips.

- Your Naumov will drink less. And we will all get vodka for you too, doctor, ha-ha-ha.

You made me very happy with the last one. I use my portion for the treatment of wounds. So what about hot food?

- Let's solve this issue. I will send a sergeant-major to put all of our people on boiler allowance. It's really hard without hot food. And without you they thought, but it's not so simple, the battalions do not stand in one place.

"But our repairmen always follow them, close to their rear, the kitchen.

After dinner, I was called to the company commander. There was an engineer-lieutenant colonel Ivanov. He told me that at 22.00 I would go with him to the war zone to our repairmen to provide them with medical assistance. There are many injuries, abrasions, frostbite, but there is no one to help them. The medical platoon is located far from them, near the brigade command post.

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At the appointed time, I left with him. Attached in the body of an open car among the tank tracks and other pieces of iron. He wrapped himself in a tarpaulin with his head, but he did not save from the cold, he was very cold by the time they arrived. Felt boots in a sitting position did little to save from the frost, only when walking they warmed the legs, and the frost was severe, during the day it was over twenty degrees, and now it must be all thirty.

At midnight we arrived at the command post. About three hundred meters was the front line of the enemy along the northern bank of the Chervlenaya River. Our tanks approached and took up their starting positions for the attack. Other units and subunits approached the shore. On the street, I began to feel very cold, and the driver showed me the dugout of the technical service of the brigade, where he found Lieutenant Colonel Ivanov. He said that he was not allowed to leave the headquarters, took me to the signalers' dugout and said that in the morning, when our people went to the breakthrough, he would take me to the repairmen. Misha Goloshevsky, a senior lieutenant, ran into the dugout, with whom they were together in the raid from Zergent to the inter-lake defile. We exchanged a few words, remembered some episodes of our trip. Excited, full of optimism, he said that we would break the back of the enemy, and then we would overturn him. Let's make history! And he ran away. In a dugout in a corner, he warmed up and even took a nap, squatting

Tuesday, January 12, 1943 Katyusha salvo.

For some reason, I was under a bridge, over which a long freight train was rushing with a roar. Suddenly everything began to collapse with incredible noise and crackling. I cringed all over, pulled my head into my shoulders. Heard exclamations: "Finally it has begun!" I saw signalmen running towards the exit. I, apparently, slept, and the train dreamed. He jumped up and rushed after them - he was the last to jump out of the dugout. The darkness of the night was torn apart by flames flying through us into the enemy camp. All this was accompanied by a whistle and crackle, as if crumbling on the cobblestone pavement, breaking

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into skulls. That was the impression. Somewhat weaker sounded in this cacophony of artillery cannonade and explosions of shells in a small distance in the same direction. The unusualness of what he saw and heard inspired horror and fear. All this stream of fire, unusual sounds went over our heads and was directed at the enemy. How did he take this nightmare, burning and destroying everything living and inanimate? Retribution has come! Gradually, the horror of what was happening turned into admiration and delight from our capabilities and from the fact that all this was intended for the enemy. The streaks of fire continued to fall to the ground, and with a crash and hiss they scattered into small burning hearths. It was our Katyushas. In the interval between volleys of Katyushas, when the noise and crackle subsided somewhat, bomb explosions were also heard in the camp of the enemy, although the roar of aircraft was not perceived.

The enemy continued to resist fiercely. He was doomed, and he certainly knew it. And we were sure that this time the enemy would be destroyed. But the Nazis did not give up, they fought as long as they could hold weapons in their hands.

During the first two days of fighting there were no prisoners in our sector, and we made little progress. The defensive lines of the enemy were not overturned. Today, apparently, there was a turning point

in combat operations. Ours broke through the defenses, crossed the river and went far ahead. The observation post of the brigade and the command moved to a new area, following the 189th tank regiment and the motorized rifle machine gun battalion. The headquarters, service units and the medical platoon have remained here for now. The cannonade of the ongoing battle did not subside in other areas. There was a battle to defeat the enemy throughout the ring of his environment.

We walked along the recently snow-covered steppe, torn apart by shells and melted from fire. Earth mixed with snow, heaps of iron with human bodies. The enemy was destroyed systematically and relentlessly.

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They also met our broken equipment, the corpses of our soldiers, the wounded, medical posts, battalion, regiment.

We searched along the way for our people with lagging behind cars and tanks and found them. They immediately found out their condition, and Lieutenant Colonel Ivanov decided what to do with them. We arrived at the first-aid post of the 189th Tank Regiment. There were wounded and burnt and with frostbite tankers. They were being prepared for evacuation to the medical platoon. We camped in two canvas tents. Both had sub-zero temperatures, even in the one where the iron stove was heated. The wounded and medical workers froze.

There were battles ahead, a few kilometers from the village of Tsybenko. We turned back. Voropaev and a group of repairmen remained at one wrecked tank, and we went to the location of the rest of the repairmen of the technical support group, who were given specific tasks to restore part of our equipment that had failed.

I met Sargsyan, Gen, Korol, Vanin and many others here. While he was in medical care. The repairmen had serious injuries, abrasions, boils. Many were with slight frostbite of fingers, cheeks, chin, ears. One repairman was injured and had frostbite on the fingers of his left hand. Received during the repair of tank tracks. The skin of the hand was smeared with grease and wrapped in a towel. So he was advised. Bubbles have already formed. Cleaned from grease and put on a gauze bandage. He needed to be evacuated to a medical battalion or hospital. I reported to Lieutenant Colonel Ivanov about him.

In the medical platoon I met the brigdoctor Dzhatiev and reported to him that he was in the technical support group, provided medical assistance to those in need, and brought one repairman with frostbite to the fingers to the medical platoon. He ordered to stay here under the command of Hasan Zade and set the task of escorting the wounded from the medical platoon to the hospitals. To the question, what about the technical support company

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cheniya, he said that he would notify my company commander. I stayed.

The temperature in the dressing room was above zero, somewhere around five degrees. The solutions did not freeze. There they provided first aid. The wounded froze while they got into the dressing room and awaiting evacuation. The last batch of wounded was taken away by the military assistant of the control company Gomelsky. Medical instructor Ivanov returned from Krasnoarmeysk, where he took the first batch of the wounded. Two vehicles with the wounded arrived - an ambulance and a truck. They were accompanied by military assistant Modzelevsky. All the wounded from his battalion. After unloading, he immediately departed for himself - there were heavy battles for Tsybenko. It was not possible to take it on the move.

The wounded were unloaded into the reception and evacuation tent. There were not enough stretchers for everyone, and some of the wounded were laid on a tarpaulin spread on the frozen ground. The central passage remained, and the wounded were placed almost back to back on both sides. Dr. Gasan-Zade examined everyone and told us who to take to the dressing room first, and who then. Some were given

medical care is right here. Bandages were bandaged where the bandage got off or soaked with blood, some were given splints. In addition to injuries, they also had frostbite.

It was already dark when the wounded were prepared for evacuation. Dinner was brought in thermoses: porridge and tea. They fed and watered the wounded. We all didn't have enough. We then warmed boiling water on the stove for ourselves, drank with breadcrumbs.

A military assistant of the first tank battalion was sent to accompany the wounded. His battalion was nearby in operational reserve. I expected to be directed. They said I had enough work to do.

Wednesday, January 13, 1943 IN THE MEDSIAN VZVOD.

The women were in a separate dugout. They were heated and protected by medical instructor Ivanov. They trusted him. We men gathered in another dugout. Stove

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burned badly, smoked. Snow was blowing under the door. Shallow outside. Ladna came in and reported to Hasan Zade that the driver of the head of the political department had arrived and asked her to come to the command post with a sanitary bag.

- To go or not to go?

- Do as you see fit.

— May I not go?

- Decide for yourself. I don't forbid you if you want. If you refuse, I will send medical instructor Ivanov. You decide.

You know he needs me.

- Then you go.

She turned and left. There were condemning remarks, they began to discuss women, their fate in the war.

"I can't be their watchman if they don't take care of themselves," Gasan-Zade said. — Ha! She asks "to go or not to go?", And she, the filly, is torn. If I didn't want to, I said 6, and I would have sent another, otherwise "to go or not to go\*" ... Try to hold them back if they are torn themselves, - the commander of the medical platoon continued to grumble.

That evening I learned a lot about the life and life of the medical platoon. There is not enough transport, it is not always allocated from the brigade headquarters on time. Usually passing. They stand in the control company for allowances and do not always deliver food to them. They must also prepare for the wounded, but no one knows how many there will be, and it is impossible to give an exact application in advance. With a large flow of the wounded, there is no time to write applications and no one to send with. It happens that they bring a lot of food, and the wounded have already been sent. More often the opposite happens. Yesterday, the doctors were left without dinner - they gave it to the wounded.

Women are constantly attacked, especially when the situation is calmer. The brigade commander cleaned up Dr. Lozhkina, and she spent a lot of time with him, which could not but affect the work of the medical platoon. Now she has retired from the front due to pregnancy.

Attempts by the head of the political department Maksimov to tame Dr. Weinstein failed, and he switched

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thoroughly on Ladna. It's not the first night, as I understand it, he takes her to him. He has a separate closed car with a heated body. Doctor Bolshakova is also being attacked. Closer to success is the head of intelligence of the brigade. Maya was not spoken badly about. Shepshelev called her touchy. As if this is not the most flattering review of a woman in these conditions. I managed to notice that she was withdrawn, sick or worried about something. It has not yet been possible to talk, and it is inconvenient to go there to them. Lyuba did not force her out of my thoughts. With Lyuba, everything happened somehow unexpectedly and, as it seemed to me, humanly unjustified, without a conscious desire. The endless tango of "Champagne Splashes", the luxurious bed with her and my mother, and her coming to my bed the next night ... All this was wonderful and disgusting in its simplicity. It does not fit that all this can so easily happen between strangers. Even with Maya, I wouldn't allow it. I am pleased to be with her, to communicate at work, to take care of her, and more?... Apparently I'm not ready for more. So I thought until the candle went out. I decided not to add firewood, the smoke was blowing into the dugout. They lay on the bunk in their overcoats, clinging to each other. The cold was getting to me and I had to get up. Went outside. The cannonade of not so distant battle was well audible. They broke into the German defenses. Ours fought day and night.

And here, quite large snowdrifts were swept around in sections, the entrance to the dugout, the dressing room was swept over, the paths were not visible, they were leveled with the surface. He fulfilled a small need behind the dugout. How about a big one? It is cold, but there are military units, transport, people walking nearby. Dr. Bolshakova came out of the dugout, said hello, looked around and walked along the beam. How about them women? Where can you hide from the human eye, or rather, the male one? It can be seen that she needs to cope with her natural needs, and all around it is white and white from the snow and the bushes are rare. Everything is visible at a glance. He took a shovel and began to clear the paths, and Bolshakova sat down in a small distance

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behind the snowdrift. I pretended not to see anything. How difficult it is for them, women, in these conditions, many times more difficult than for us, men. We look at them as women, but do we help them, do we care?

When Bolshakova went into the dugout, I went to a larger snowdrift behind their dugout and dug out a tunnel with a turn at an angle, raising the edges higher. After all, Maya will need go out.

The echoes of the battle going on in the distance were heard more and more clearly. Soon there will be wounded. Brigadier Jatiev arrived. He brought his wife, Nina. She was not with us these days - she went to the hospital, for documents and personal belongings. She finally established herself in the medical platoon. Jatiev went to the headquarters of the brigade, closer to the combat area. The ambulance would have been useful for transporting the wounded, but he took it from the medical platoon for his own use.

At noon, the first car with the wounded arrived. They were brought from a tank regiment. Unloaded in the reception and evacuation tent. Two burnt tankers, the third died from burns. There was another seriously wounded in the chest. His neck and upper part of his body were swollen from the air from the wounded lung that got under the skin. This one was sent to the dressing room first. Doctor Gasan-Zade took care of him - he made an artificial pneumothorax. Three wounded in the limbs, one with frostbite of the chin, hand and foot. The burnt ones were not shifted, the existing bandages were strengthened, morphine was introduced, cordial ones, they were given warm tea to drink. I was instructed to take them to the hospital in Krasnoarmeysk. He handed over everyone alive to the surgical mobile field hospital and returned to the medical platoon after dark.

Ours took possession of the settlement of Tsybenko and went to Kravtsov. I learned that after me two more cars with the wounded left for Krasnoarmeysk. Doctor Maya invited me and the driver to her dugout.

"You're so cold that I'll have to take you in to warm me up."

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We, of course, did not refuse. They took off their overcoats and felt boots. They rubbed their legs, changed their shoes with the other end of the footcloth. They gave us sweet tea with breadcrumbs to drink. In an hour we warmed up.

In the dugout were, besides Maya, Bolshakov, Nina and Shura. They joked about us, Shura didn't mind taking both of us under the covers, which embarrassed the driver very much, but for some reason such jokes were unpleasant to me, especially knowing that she hadn't spent the night in the medical platoon. She was ready to warm many and not in jest. Blame her for it? Maya and I were often reviewed as conspirators, disapproving of Shura. I don't know how long the women would have kept us warm, but all this pleasantness was suddenly interrupted. Dzhatiev arrived and ordered to urgently load - we are going to Tsybenko.

Thursday, January 14, 1943 TSYBENKO VILLAGE.

Gathered for a short time. The stoves and pipes were cooled in the snow. We warmed up while loading up and drove out into the snow-covered night steppe. After midnight we arrived at Tsybenko. Dzhatiev brought our column to some courtyard guarded by our Red Army men from the control company. It was ordered to stay here. There were two houses in the yard. In one, more spacious, a reception room and a dressing room were deployed, in the other, the personnel of the medical platoon and part of the property were located. We finished deployment by morning and were ready to receive the wounded. Jatiev left for the brigade headquarters to report on our arrival and readiness for work. There were many troops in the village of Tsybenko. Almost nearby - the headquarters of the brigade and the company of management, many other units. I learned that our technical support group was located nearby. Hastened to them. They had two T-34 tanks and several wheeled vehicles under repair. Just sent two tanks into service.

Many of the repairmen needed medical help. There were hand injuries and frostbite. We worked in the cold with metal. Two-finger mittens are not always

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were comfortable to work with, and touching the metal with your hands in the cold caused frostbite with the appearance of blisters.

He began to provide them with medical assistance in one of the flights. Everyone had almost something frozen: either the chin, or the cheek, or the nose. Serious frostbite of the fingers was in one of the repairmen, and I took him to the medical platoon. It was sent along with the party  
the sick to the hospital.

On the way to the repairmen and on the way back, I passed a pile of broken equipment of the enemy and ours, there were many frozen corpses of the Germans. In one place they were stacked like firewood in long stacks, frozen in various poses. On the side from which he walked, heads and bare feet stuck out. Find your peace, find what you deserve.

There were only two injured cars today. The military assistant Shepshelev took them to the hospital. More and more came with frostbite of the limbs.

In the afternoon we were able to rest a bit. I really wanted to sleep. They didn't know what lay ahead. Doctor Gasan-Zade allowed one half of the personnel to lie down. In the house in one of the rooms there were bunk beds. There we settled down: at the bottom of the women, and at the top of the men. They did not allocate a separate room for women. This one was heated, and the bunks were comfortable. I immediately fell into the abyss.

Slept for a short time. I don't know what woke me up, but I felt refreshed. Maya did not sleep, she stood at the window and thawed, blowing on the glass of the preserved window, through which she looked out. I went up to her and asked why she was so thoughtful, sad all these days, was she healthy and what was she worried about? She replied that she was healthy, but an incomprehensible melancholy gnawed at her. And very tired, both physically and mentally. She assured me that she would try to tune in to a lighter wave, but it's just very difficult for them. Looked at her and compared with Any. Thought I could be with her like

with Any, and immediately drove away this thought. Wouldn't dare. I was pleased to be near, to see her. We had

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some kind of inner closeness, some kind of mystery that did not come true, which brought them closer. The thought of physical intimacy with her did not fit in my mind. Shura's relationship with Maximov and others before him was disgusting, as was my relationship with Lyuba. Why do so many and pleasant men talk about it, but I can't be in solidarity with them? I didn't even feel the need to brag about it. Or was it embarrassing?

Went with two teapots for water. Warm up the boiling water. They drank with crackers. There was no tea leaves, no sugar - they did not bring it from the control company, as well as dinner that evening. With the onset of darkness, Ladna went to Maksimov without warning Dr. Gasan-Zade, without asking his permission. We went to bed early before the wounded arrived. We were glad to have the opportunity to relax in the warmth. The flow of the wounded could be at any time.

Friday, January 15, 1943 An endless stream of wounded and corpses...

Woke up dark. Perhaps from the explosions of air bombs and artillery cannonade, which were heard very close. The assault began very early, which means that the wounded will also go. Everyone started to get up. Didn't wash. Who wiped his face with snow. I was ordered to clear the entrance to the medical platoon from snow. Doctor Hasan-Zade said that I should be ready to accompany the wounded on the first flight. Even before breakfast, two airborne cars arrived, and ours ran in. The wounded were taken to the reception room, the heavier ones to the dressing room. And in this party they had frostbite, mainly on the fingers, hands and feet. The wounded were severe, with extensive shrapnel wounds from grenades and mines. One Red Army soldier had a crushed foot—in the darkness his foot somehow got under the caterpillar of our tank. He was in shock, numb from the cold. It takes at least three hours to get him to the hospital in Krasnoarmeysk or Beketovka, and in such a cold and in a state of shock he may die on the way. Hasan-Zade decided to

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to amputate his foot. He said he would die if he didn't do it. Operated together with Dr. Bolshakova. Weinstein worked in tandem with Shepshelev, treating wounds and applying bandages. Medical instructor Ivanov and I put on tires, prepared for the evacuation. It was very crowded in the waiting room, it was difficult to pass between the stretchers. The wounded should have at least been given hot tea to drink. Breakfast has not yet been brought from the control company. I had to boil tea on the stove. Hands were missing. The orderlies carried the wounded and helped us, chopped wood and heated the stove. Ivanov said that it would not hurt to wake up Ladna.

- Is she here?

"Yes," he replied, "she just came in and went to bed."

In my tunic I ran across the yard to the second house. Shura slept downstairs on the bunk. I pushed her aside and asked her to warm up tea for the wounded, as we would soon be evacuating them. He returned to the reception and continued to work there. The orderlies had already put kettles of water on the stove. Hasan-Zade left the dressing room, examined the wounded and outlined the sequence of their direction to the dressing room. He asked where Ladna was. I replied that I was resting, woke her up, but for some reason did not come.

"Go bring her here. How can one do without gentle female hands here. Drink some tea. Run after her, at least bring it in your arms, - he ordered, either seriously or ironically.

I again ran across the yard to another house. She didn't even think about getting up. As she was in an overcoat and felt boots, she slept. I started waking her up again, pulled off my felt boots and dragged her by the foot to the edge of the bunk.



- Hasan-Zade sent, said to bring you if you do not go. You must have a conscience. Send the wounded soon, to give them tea to drink, and you are lying around, - I could not resist.

She muttered something, pushed me away with her feet, promised me some curses. She was apparently drunk.

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"Shameless," I flared up, "you're not here for debauchery, it's something else, more necessary need to do.

"You are envious, puppy," I heard, "get the hell out of here." I've seen such ... - curses rained down, the spirit of which even the paper could not stand. And I had no choice but to leave. Something very bad happened. Why did I have to interfere in this matter? Ivanov would have gone to wake her up, but they sent me. I reported to Dr. Gasan-Zade that she did not want and could not get up. She scolded me for waking her up, and in a way that I had never heard before. He waved his hand, saying:

— Eh, doctor, you think I'll lift it, only to humiliate myself. I'm not their boss. There are many other than me. Let's finish. It's time for you to go. New ones will be brought back soon.

And we continued to treat the wounded, put tires on. Many of the bandages got wet and had to be replaced, because all this would freeze on the way. The wounded asked for water. The orderlies carried mugs of boiling water, sugar and crackers. Some had to be spoon-fed. There was a groan, some cursed that they were not taken to the dressing room, one kept shouting why others were chosen, and not him. Shepshchev came out and asked for a mug of boiling water for him and Maya. When I had already finished treating the wounded, I felt that I was cold. He put on an overcoat. What is it like to be injured? They still have a long way to go, three hours to the nearest hospital in a cold car, in frost and blizzard.

A ZIS-5 truck, covered with a tarpaulin, approached. The heavier ones were loaded into an ambulance, and the rest into a truck, and I took them to the southeast. I didn't know where yet, but I decided to stay in the direction of Beketovka. Somewhat closer, but the road runs along the war zone. We decided to take a risk with the driver.

The path lay through the settlements of Popov, Yagodny. Only a few days the fighting ended here. Military equipment, frozen corpses in gray-green overcoats, powdered with snow, are scattered along the broken road, somewhat cleared. Destroyed and burned nase

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lazy points. We drove past the cemetery of German aircraft. In places the corpses of the German invaders, stacked in long piles, burned, and in places they smoldered, doused with diesel fuel, And emitted around them the nauseating smell of burnt meat and rags. The frozen land could not accept, and it would be unfair to desecrate it, the Soviet Volga land, with fascist corpses. And there were a myriad of them.

It was right to turn this filth into ashes. There were also columns of German prisoners of war, who went towards them. Finally, the Germans began to surrender. They presented a pitiful spectacle. Shawls and scarves over headaddresses, whoever has something on their feet: boots, and felt boots, and wooden shoes, and rags wrapped in ropes. It was joyful to know that they would no longer fight against us. Along the road we met many of our troops marching on foot and in transport. There were anti-aircraft installations ready for battle. In the area of Yagodny, he tried to hand over the wounded to the medical battalion of some division, but they were not taken. They said that they were sending their own, as they had to change their location. And they recommended taking it to Beketovka. Wounded in the chest, he died on the way. Another wounded on the way had to put a tourniquet on his thigh, as the bandage on his lower leg was heavily soaked with blood. On the road one time

loosened a tourniquet for him so that necrosis of the limb would not occur, which was not excluded with such cold.

Less than three hours after departure, we arrived in Beketovka. And it took about half an hour before they managed to unload the wounded into the surgical field mobile hospital. The wounded were numb, perhaps, and received additional frostbite, which will become clear later. While handing over the wounded, it began to get dark. Here the driver and I were fed hot porridge, well-brewed tea with white bread, and, having refreshed ourselves and warmed up, we set off on the same road back. Around midnight we arrived at Tsybenko. We learned that our brigade, in cooperation with other units, captured the settlement of Kravtsov and left in the direction of the Basargino junction.

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The driver and I, without taking off our greatcoats, climbed onto the bunks in hats and fell asleep. There is little time left until morning, and it is not known whether these few hours will be used for rest. The battle continued into the night.

Saturday, January 16, 1943 VARVAROVA AGAIN.

Apparently, he had just fallen asleep when they all woke us up. Jatiev arrived again and ordered to urgently load - we are going to a new location - to the area of the Basargino siding. It was difficult to get up, break away from the bunk, but after five minutes they were already in business. The cabins of the cars were occupied, and I got into an ambulance, it was less windy here. I sat on the bench between Maya and Nina.

Lady didn't talk to me. She answered some question with harshness, and I did not turn to her anymore. Maya asked me at one stop when we got out of the car what happened between us. I told her briefly. "In vain I hurt her," Maya remarked, "she looks good-natured, but she can take cruel revenge."

My company commander Mikhailovsky came for me. He said that he had agreed with the command and was taking me to the company. There, many with injuries and frostbite need medical assistance.

I said goodbye to my colleagues from the medical platoon. I climbed into the body, and they started shaking me over the potholes of the snow-covered steppe road. Soon we arrived at the location of our mobile technical support team. We were joined by a part of the repairmen as part of one flying unit and an onboard vehicle. They had to replenish with spare parts and get products. The offensive momentum of our troops fell somewhat. Need replenishment. All of us, including Drozd, Gen, Sargsyan, Korol, Kruglyakov, returned to Varvarovka. They crowded into the bat, somehow got used to it, settled down. It was very crowded, it soon became hot. On the way, an iron stove was heated. They began to pull off their greatcoats and hats. All this had to go somewhere. Somehow it was necessary to put my feet in felt boots, because on the floor and on

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shelves were boxes, pieces of iron. Gradually on the way shaken. And outside the frost reached twenty-five degrees.

We went to the places of recent battles. To the east of the Basargino junction was the enemy airfield. We were passing by. Many black silhouettes with white crosses stood out clearly in the snow. It seemed that all these Yuyunkers, Messers, Focke-Wulfs were about to take off with their deadly cargo. But it was a graveyard of German planes, many of them undamaged, but without fuel. Along the road lay a lot of shattered military equipment, enemy and ours, and there were also piles of frozen corpses of the enemy. The whole road was full of potholes, and we were rocked and thrown up in the car.

I was vacated the same house in which it was located earlier. The stove was heated. He asked a Red Army soldier to be his assistant. He chopped wood, heated water on the stove for baths, and I

began to provide medical assistance to personnel. They visited me before and after dinner. Many were with festering abrasions that did not heal for a long time, furunculosis, and quite a few with frostbite. During this entire period, the personnel did not wash. The foreman of the company said that a few days ago he gave out clean linen to everyone, and handed over the dirty linen to the brigade warehouse for disinfection and washing. Ordered to issue clean linen to all arrivals. And I got new underwear, simple and warm. In the first-aid post, I warmed a bucket of water on the stove and washed my hair over a basin, then washed up to my waist, and then below. I experienced a very pleasant feeling from washing, from fresh linen, from being among my own. After many days, he finally undressed to his underwear and went to sleep in his padded envelope. What a joy I experienced...

Sunday, January 17, 1943 "IF THE ENEMY DOES NOT SURRENDER, IT IS DESTROYED"

I woke up when it was already light in the windows. The windows are painted with frost. Quiet. No gunfire, no other noise. Remembered where I am. He carefully opened the door and a Red Army soldier came in. Brought breakfast in two pots: porridge with herring

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coy and tea. I put it on a box. From his pocket he pulled out pieces of sugar, from under the bosom of his greatcoat, a quarter of a loaf of frozen gray bread.

- Breakfast brought, eat. They were waiting for you to come to take a test, but I said that it was still the first dream sees.

I could not leave the medical center for several hours. They went for medical help. Finally, he got dressed and walked around all the objects of the company.

There was one tank in the workshop, which was recognized as unsuitable for restoration in our conditions. Wheeled vehicles were repaired.

After dinner, the political officer gathered all the personnel in the workshop and spoke about the brigade's combat operations, read out the brigade's leaflet.

On January 10, our command offered the encircled enemy grouping to capitulate, but the Nazis refused. And the rate was forced to decide on the destruction. "If the enemy does not surrender, they destroy him!" And throughout the encirclement, our troops began military operations to destroy the enemy, in which our brigade is also involved.

During the week of fighting since January 10, 1943, the 254th tank brigade, cooperating with the 38th and 422nd rifle divisions, broke through the heavily fortified multi-echeloned enemy defenses. True, progress was slower than expected at first. The enemy offered stubborn resistance. The settlements of Tsybenko, Kravtsov, Novikovo, and the Basargino junction were liberated. The path of movement for the brigade was not easy. The tanks on the streets of the city could not maneuver and were a convenient target for their destruction.

The enemy created heavily fortified lines, mined the approaches to their positions, equipped pillboxes and bunkers, installed artillery, mortars, rows of barbed wire, and sniper groups. All this stood in the way of advancement, but our tankers and submachine gunners selflessly went forward, inflicting damage on enemy personnel and equipment.

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ka. Thousands of prisoners were taken, a lot of military equipment. The Germans began to surrender in large groups. The commander of the motorized rifle machine-gun battalion, Captain Balaev, distinguished himself in battle. The battalion exterminated over three hundred enemy soldiers and officers. The crew of Lieutenant Margolin, with pierced oil tanks and a turret, continued to fight, crushing the manpower and equipment of the enemy with their caterpillars. The tank was blown up. The entire crew was killed. The crews of Malygin, Solod, Dmitriev distinguished themselves. The repairmen also excelled.

A technical support group from our company, headed by senior military technician Drozd, repaired three T-60 tanks and five vehicles on the battlefield, returning them to service. Two T-34 tanks and three T-70 tanks were evacuated from the battlefield. Then he said that our brigade suffered losses in manpower and equipment. War is not without casualties. "Let's honor the fallen comrades with a moment of silence..."

Everyone stood up and took off their hats. Then he said that our troops were preparing for the next assault on enemy positions located at the Voroanov, Peschanka, Gornaya Polyana line. Our repairmen will also participate as part of the technical support group, the rest will restore military equipment in the workshops, which should be deployed closer to the combat area of the brigade. He finished his speech, expressing confidence that we will cope with the task successfully. Stroy answered indifferently: "We will cope, we will complete the task!" On this they parted ways.

It can be seen that the new political officer fell in love with the personnel. Eats with everyone from the cauldron. Always in public, unobtrusively delving into all the affairs of the company. They say about him: "His own on the board."

Monday, January 168, 1943 THE BLOCKADE OF LENINGRAD IS BROKEN!

We learned about a joyful event. The soldiers of the Volkhov and Leningrad fronts broke through the blockade of Leningrad. Before dinner, the personnel lined up, and the political officer for

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read the report of the Information Bureau announcing the breakthrough of the blockade of the long-suffering city of Lenin. We rejoiced. They felt that the encircled grouping in Stalingrad would soon be destroyed. Joyful events are ripening for our entire Motherland. Victory is coming! Lieutenant Balashov went on a birthday. Everyone congratulated him, a Leningrader, and wished him to return to his city in good health. We were happy for his relatives, friends, for all the long-suffering Leningraders, for the country as a whole.

Today we received letters from relatives - a pendant for many to the general joy. My relatives knew where we were, wished for a speedy victory over the enemy. K. dinner was given one hundred grams of front-line vodka. We drank for Leningrad. After dinner, Manko, Sargsyan, Gen. Manko was sad, there were still no letters from his wife, he was firmly convinced that she was evacuated with her son, but did not write. Our good mood was soon transferred to him. Kostya Naumov came in and said that he sees himself not far off in Odessa.

— There is a good proverb: "Don't say gop until you jump over." Naumov, we still have to finish here, and there are still many things to do before Odessa. And how many of ours are dying here, one might say, in vain. No one will help the Germans here, they are already kaput. It was necessary to wait some time, and they would begin to surrender. More of us would have survived," Sargsyan said.

"I'm also a strategist," Gen objected. "It is necessary to quickly release the armies and send everyone to the Western Front.

"Two or three weeks would not solve anything. Our armies would put themselves in order, replenished with people and equipment, and while they waited, how many lives would be saved. They don't protect their soldiers.

"It is also necessary for the public of the world to destroy the enemy as quickly as possible, to show our strength and to cheer up the rear for the rear.

"Why such sacrifices, when we will win anyway," Sargsyan defended his position, "he values people's lives inexpensively."

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our command. It is impossible to achieve victory at any cost, at any cost. You have to feel sorry for your people.

— That yak is his, our command knows how to act. Apparently, it is necessary. I'm also a strategist! Manko also joined in the solution of strategic issues.

The conversation began to take an unpleasant turn. Sargsyan was talking too much, not at the right time and place. Usually silent, from whom it was not so easy to squeeze out a word, suddenly started talking. Maybe more than one serving of vodka cost? Although it seems like everyone here is their own, it shouldn't be spread - SMERSHAa has long ears.

Our people have already learned to fight. Such an operation was carried out that changed the whole course of the war. Only now and crush the bastard, until he came to his senses, - I decided to change the course of the conversation.

Sargsyan swore and waved his hand.

— To exterminate the enemy, not postponing even for a day, while fortune turned to us. Drive while they run west, and then you need to finish as quickly as possible. The war is not without casualties. There is still a lot of work ahead, so we must finish here without delay, - Alexander Gen developed his strategy and added: - We will end the war faster, we will improve our life faster.

- Well, let's live, guys, we will create such a life for ourselves - you will swing. I have not yet decided what I will do, what place under the sky I will take," Kostya said dreamily.

- Oh, to live to win! See this good life, what will come after the war.

— Not only to see, but also to live in it.

And the conversation moved in a different direction.

Sitting warm after dinner with a hundred grams and encouraged by such good news, we were already making plans for our life after the victory, which no one doubted. Everyone came to the conclusion that after the war we will live well, we will all work, and we will have everything.

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Tuesday, January 19, 1943 GOD DOES NOT DIVIDE EVENLY.

After breakfast, an impressive combined technical support group headed by senior military technician Drozd left. Past us to the north-east, all our troops walked and walked. Our planes are in the sky. Enemy is not visible. The echoes of battles are not heard here - the deep Rear.

Our drivers came for ammunition and fuel. With us were all the warehouses of the brigade. Part of the property remained in cars, the main amount was stored nearby in ravines or gullies. The personnel of the warehouses were serviced by us: they were on boiler allowances and on medical care.

I figured out the state of the economic service and its employees, since there was time. There was a supply of clean linen, but in recent weeks they have not been issued to personnel. Practically the body was not washed. Nothing new with food. They continued to cook separately for the company commander. The foreman of the company, Nikolaev, felt like a master in everything. Good for the commander and his entourage, and this is enough to have a strong position and benefit for oneself in these conditions. The cooks have grown fatter in breadth, rounded off. Kharitonov had a tummy, an imposing waddling gait. Mezentsev walks around. He kept records of economic and technical property, walked in a sheepskin coat, in new white felt boots. Lukyanov handed out vodka at lunch and felt at ease - all the time he was "under the fly." To whom are donuts, and to whom are cones. No wonder there is a saying: "God does not evenly divide." And in the conditions of the company, its own elite appeared. For them, they are prepared separately from the best products and in larger quantities, taking them away from the personnel. They dress in everything new, provide themselves with sheepskin coats, although not all of them are supposed to according to the staffing table, they often change underwear. Don't forget to add yourself to the award lists.

So in units, formations, armies, floors are created on which our soldiers are located - the brainchild of the people

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yes, performing a nationwide task: the defeat of the enemy and the liberation of our Motherland. The greatest tests fall on people located on the lower floors. In practice, the fulfillment of the tasks of the combat situation mainly depends on them, although they are in the worst material and living conditions and are more likely to die. And on increasing floors, the chance of dying is not excluded, but is in a decreasing degree...

The commander arrived and gathered all the remaining platoon and squad leaders. He announced that tomorrow we were leaving for a new area northwest of Peschanka, near Voroaponovo, closer to the brigade's battlefield.

Wednesday, January 20, 1943 FOLLOWING THE BATTLE ORDER.

Well, frost! The loading was completed late at night. Didn't sleep. The cars warmed up all night. They warmed themselves in the huts, sitting or standing near the stove.

At noon the column of our cars started moving. Behind them, the kitchens were smoking. Along the route lay the broken military equipment of the enemy and our frozen corpses of the Germans, horses. We drove past yet another enemy airfield, where there were seemingly whole planes with white crosses. Near Solovyov, a long column of German prisoners of war met - trudging, wrapped in scarves, in blankets, half-frozen soldiers and officers of the Nazi army. They were accompanied by our warriors in sheepskin coats, felt boots, hats with earflaps - winners! How we have been waiting for this moment! But there is no end yet. Many sacrifices await us on this journey. And the enemy would stop resistance. No one doubted that in the coming weeks it would be completely defeated. And the enemy certainly knows it. I would have been taken prisoner. We would have saved our lives. Why resist so stubbornly? From despair, foreseeing death? From fear of retribution? Or from fear of their commanders? All of them in the leaflets were offered to capitulate and were guaranteed to save their lives,

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medical care, return to Germany at the end of the war. And they didn't go for it. Nazi propaganda managed to fool them with a fanatical belief in their Fuhrer, the Reich, the superiority of the German nation over other peoples. And the vast majority of Nazis prefer death to captivity.

Soon they heard the echoes of the battles ahead. Our troops stormed Peschanka. Three kilometers to the west of it, in a small settlement, the column stopped. Time passed, and we continued to stand in the bare steppe. The echoes of the battles either increased or subsided. We are in a snowy field. They began to pull warmed-up warriors out of the flyers, and they were replaced with others from the cold. The exchange took place every one and a half to two hours, and in this way everyone managed to warm up periodically. The more impudent and shameless managed to sit in the summer camp for more time, and even all night. Long after midnight, the company commander arrived, we learned that we would be located on the northern outskirts of Peschanka. She has almost been liberated from the enemy. In the morning we will enter it and deploy our workshops. The brigade is fighting on the outskirts of the Voroaponovo station. The enemy puts up stubborn resistance. We have significant losses of personnel and equipment - many wrecked tanks and wheeled vehicles. They will be sent to us for repairs. Our technical support group has a lot of work - they repair vehicles directly on the battlefield. In the early morning we drove out in a column to Peschanka, rounded it from the north, since the enemy was still resisting there, and moved in the direction of the Voroaponovo station. They walked past the enemy's former defensive lines, ravaged land with snow, stuffed with broken equipment, frozen corpses that had not yet been picked up. Corpses in dark gray greatcoats predominate—the corpses of the enemy, although there are quite a few in light gray and sheepskin coats.

We stopped in some small settlement, before reaching Voroponovo station. Recently knocked out

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hence the Germans - the stoves were still warm. Soon they received an order to deploy repair shops here. The first-aid post took a place in a small one-room extension to the house. The room was heated with tiles, and it suited me just fine. Workshops are located in open-air courtyards. A group of repairmen with a supply of spare parts on a flying car and an onboard vehicle left in the direction of Voroponovo, to the brigade combat area.

An emergency happened in the company. During the unloading of ammunition, one car broke off the brakes, went into a ravine, knocked down one Red Army soldier and ran over his legs with wheels. They carried him on a stretcher to the infirmary. One felt boot was removed, the other had to be cut. It turned out to be a closed fracture of the bones of one leg. He put on a bandage, a tire, and on a GAZ-51A flatbed car drove in the direction of the Voroponovo station, where he was supposed to be our medical platoon.

There were very stubborn battles for the Voroponovo station. She was stormed many times. The enemy stubbornly defended, the buildings were turned into strongholds, and the station has not yet been given to us. The driver brought me to our technical support group. And they showed us where the medical platoon was located. The sounds of a battle going on nearby were clearly audible here. They are used to it here. The slaughter continued around the clock, somewhat calmed down at night, but did not stop. I found a medical platoon among the cluster of rear units of the units operating here. We set up a heated tent in one courtyard. The victim was left in a tent to select a group for evacuation.

I said goodbye to my colleagues and went to my own - to the technical support group. I was greeted very warmly. He set up a dressing room in the flight. Were with minor injuries, with abrasions, boils and frostbite, mostly of the first degree. They did not need hospitalization. Engaged in the restoration of two T-34 tanks. The welding machine was working. This work was supervised by

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chief military engineer Drozd. Sargsyan, Korol and others worked with him at the tanks. I had a pleasant meeting with Sasha Tsvetkov. After passing the 74th kilometer and the Elkhin beam, we owe a lot to each other, we sympathized and were always happy to meet. He complained that he could not treat me with anything. He offered a trophy watch, a harmonica, but I had a watch, and I had no talent for music, I refused. I stayed with them for several hours and went to the company.

Thursday, January 21, 1943 BRIGVORACH IS WOUNDED.

A Red Army repairman came into the room of the first-aid post and reported that they had come to see me. After him came the military paramedic Gomelsky, pale and frightened. I was surprised by his arrival and appearance. Gomelsky released the Red Army soldier and immediately blurted out to me:

— The trouble happened. I wounded brigdoctor Jatiev. He's here in the car, he brought it. What do we do?

And I stared, stunned by what I heard, not yet understanding what he was talking about.

"No one must know about this," he said.

- He is alive?

- Alive, of course.

- Heavy?

- Not good.

- Where?

— What where?

- Wounded where?

- In the ass.

- Where?

— Near the sacrum.

Why did you bring him here? What are we going to do to him? In some medical battalion, he should have been to take or to the hospital.

- He ordered it. Yes, we were heading for you.

- For what?

- More on that later. Need to do something.

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"Let's carry him here," and I grabbed the stretcher.

"You don't need a stretcher, there is one in the car, let's go faster, he froze there."

I put on my hat, put on my overcoat, and we went out into the snow-covered street. The ambulance was surrounded by our Red Army soldiers, who were interested in what had happened. We approached the car, opened the side door, said hello and looked around. Jatiev was lying on the lower side stretcher, belly down. From above it was covered with a cotton envelope. I asked the driver to open the rear doors, got into the car, unfastened the straps of the stretcher and asked him to help carry out the brigdoctor. Gomelsky, killed by what had happened, detached, walked behind. The stretcher with the wounded man was placed on the floor, and I began to undress him in order to examine him.

- Bandage applied?

"Yes," Gomelsky answered.

"She slipped," Jatiev said, groaning.

- We'll replace it.

They took off their overcoat, raised their tunic with underwear, lowered their trousers with bloody underpants. A blood-soaked gauze bandage lay on the sacrum. He cut it with scissors and removed it. On the right buttock, closer to the sacrum, there was a small oval wound with dried blood, the entrance hole of a bullet wound, which must have entered the body flat.

- Where did she go? I asked.

- Who?

Where did the bullet go?

"It must have got stuck in the bone, in the sacrum," Jatiev prompted.

"Did you urinate, Comrade Lieutenant Colonel?"



- No, I really want to.

"We need to look at the urine to see if the bullet hit the bladder.

- Where to urinate?

- There is a bucket.

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- That's right, you need to urinate. Already unbearable. Put on a bandage first," Jatiev supervised the provision of assistance to himself.

"Now," I said.

He took out the "PF" kit, treated the skin around the wound with alcohol. With his finger, he felt the skin around the wound and felt for a tubercle, which, when pressed, noted soreness. It could have been a bullet, with which Jatiev agreed. Again treated with alcohol around the wound, smeared it with tincture of iodine, put a pad of an indoper bag on the wound, strengthened it with a bandage around the waist, pulled another bandage over the thigh to fix the bandage. He asked to be helped to stand up and urinated into a bucket. The urine was without blood. The stomach was calm, and the general condition and well-being were not bad, except for the fright that prevailed over all of us. In the room, there was a wall-to-wall bed on which I slept. He spread a blanket over the mattress, fluffed up the pillow, and laid the doctor down. Covered with a cotton envelope. There were no sheets. He asked to be laid on his side, which they did.

The company commander, political officer came running. They asked if the injury was serious, how it happened. He is everything answered:

- I went to the medical battalion of the neighboring division to agree that they would take our wounded. To the hospital, to Beketovka, to carry far. I wanted a little, I stopped the car in the open steppe, got out and just finished, when something hit me in the sacrum and burned me, like they pierced me with red-hot wire. He gasped, felt with his hand, and she was covered in blood. I realized that I must have been wounded by a random bullet. The shot was not heard. That's how it happened," he finished.

— Report to the brigade commander? asked Mikhailovsky.

- No need. The lads will take me to the nearest medical battalion, they will pull out a bullet there, and it didn't happen. I'll lie down for a bit, warm up, and we'll go.

"Do you need anything, Comrade Brigadier?" Maybe something to eat?

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Thank you, nothing is needed yet.

- Rest. May I go?

Yes, go ahead and mind your own business.

They are gone. Jatiev turned to us:

"So it was, as I said. If they ask, just say so, you understand?

"That's right," Gomelsky drew himself up, somewhat emboldened.

"Understood," I replied.

"That's right," the driver replied.

- And you, Gomelsky, I ask you to go to the medical platoon, tell Gasan-Zade about this, he will report to the command, and I ask you to bring Nina here. She will help me. After all, the operating room nurse.

- I obey, - answered Gomelsky, - allow me to go?

— Go. Speak as I said.

- Will be done!

And Gomelsky went to the exit. Me and the driver followed him. Near the car asked how it happened. Gomelsky hesitated a little and told the following.

All of this, it turns out, was my fault. Once I liked his sixteen-shot pistol "Walter". He promised to get me and got it. When Jatiev invited him to go with him to the medical battalion of the 38th rifle division, with which the brigade is cooperating to agree on the possibility of evacuating our wounded to them, Gomelsky offered to call on our company. Jatiev agreed. My friend took the gun with him to give it to me. After the medical battalion, they went to our location. The brigvrach was sitting next to the driver, and Gomelsky was behind him, behind the iron stove, on a side bench. I decided to look at the gun that was carrying me. I began to fiddle with it, took out the magazine, refueled, and suddenly there was a shot in the car, and Jatiev screamed, clutching his hands below the waist. Gomelsky was speechless, and he was completely paralyzed. The driver stopped the car, laid Dzhatiev on

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stretcher. Gomelsky gradually came out of his stupor and examined the brigdoctor. There was a bleeding wound on the buttock. Gomelsky, with trembling hands, took out an iodine tincture, lubricated the wound, applied a bandage, and gradually began to come to his senses.

Jatiev ordered to go to me. Were already close. The bullet passed through two walls of the iron stove, the seat, and, weakened by these obstacles, entered the soft tissues of the buttocks and rested on the sacrum. The first to realize that everything ended well, Jatiev himself came up with a more or less possible version, so that they would believe in it. It was all my fault, as Gomelsky put it. He left, "Walter" gave it to me and warned me not to repeat the vile law of the double case.

The gun was hidden in the hallway. Tea was warmed to Jatiev, canned food, bread, and sugar were brought from the kitchen. He asked for some alcohol and took it inside to disinfect the wound, as he put it, and to move away from the fear experienced.

During the conversation, he made a very good impression. He joked, told a lot of funny things, but little about himself. Originally from Ossetia. Prior to our brigade, he held a large medical post in the front. But something happened, and the brigade doctor was sent to us. His wife Nina (if she was his real wife, for twenty years younger than him) worked as an operating nurse in a hospital. He hoped that she would deal with him, and therefore decided to wait for her. In the evening, an ambulance arrived with the same driver. Nina arrived, examined the wound, made a dressing and decided in the morning to take him to some kind of medical battalion or hospital and remove the bullet. I gave them the first-aid post, brought dinner from what was prepared separately for the commander, as well as canned meat. So ordered our commander. He went to Manko's for the night. He also took the driver of the ambulance.

An order was given to the Ugr to send all the military equipment being repaired in the company to the units. One hundred

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there were two T-70 tanks and several wheeled vehicles. There was work for the bulk of the personnel until the morning of the next day.

Friday, January 22, 1943 DEATH OF MEDICAL INSTRUCTOR LADNA.

All night long, tanks and wheeled vehicles were being repaired in the workshops. During work, people were cold. In one of the pits, a barrel-stove was heated, in which they periodically warmed themselves and smoked. The wind roamed freely in the koshara, and in some places it snowed. It was difficult on the street near the tank, blown from all sides. The caterpillar was replaced during the day, and now they were doing welding work. The second tank stood under a canopy, gunsmiths were busy near it. The gun was replaced. Jammed the tower. They fiddled with it for a long time and by the morning they nevertheless put it in order. Standing near our cars is a dark gray Opel Captain, like a splinter. There are no more dents. A new fender was installed, the broken headlight was replaced. They didn't try to start it anymore, they pulled it along on a trailer. Naumov did not burn him, as he threatened, and all the others waved their hand at him. The commander needs this car and pulls it along.

At night, vehicles from subdivisions arrived, loaded up with ammunition and fuel, and left for the front line. As soon as they were oriented in the steppe? The roads are frozen. In the morning, in an ambulance, Jatiev and Nina left for the medical battalion of the 204th infantry. Our truck with spare parts for the repair group also left for the area of Voroponovo station.

A major battle was expected along the entire encirclement front. Ours were getting ready. We learned from the arriving drivers that our troops, including the subunits of the brigade, were still fighting stubbornly for Voroponovo, which had not yet been captured.

We finally cooked dinner for our repairmen, who were part of the technical support group, and decided to take them to one of the kitchens, in the boilers of which there was soup and

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tea. Porridge from the second kitchen was taken in a thermos. IJ was sent with them. |

We went to the places of the recent battle. They always leave a deep impression. The corpses were the most affected. In various poses mixed with machinery, logs, boards, earth, barely covered with snow. Many, many corpses in grey-green overcoats. The sight was terrible. Don't invent this. This must be seen. Creepy poses of human corpses among broken machinery and tormented earth. Either they raised their hands to the sky, then they hung on twisted metal, then their bare legs stuck out, then they knelt with their heads bowed, twisted insides, snow and earth stained with blood ... And they were born people for good human deeds. And what have they done?.. They haven't been removed yet. They are to burn and smolder in piles. Funeral teams picked up the corpses of our soldiers and prepared them for burial. Whether they were put in separate groups.

The cannonade of battle was heard closer and closer. We walked past military units, mostly rear ones. Medical posts regimental, battalion. The wounded right on the frosty street near the tents, in open cars, the wounded in the path of the following ...

Our tank regiment suffered heavy losses and was temporarily withdrawn from the battle. In the morning, a combat reserve of two platoons of the 1st and 2nd tank battalions was introduced into the battle. In total, they had two T-34 tanks, two T-26 tanks, one T-60 tank and one T-70 tank. This is all that is left in the brigade.

The location of our technical support group is a few hundred meters from the Voroponovo station, on the territory of which there have been fierce battles for the past few days. In a small, broken garden, our wrecked tanks and wheeled vehicles were pulled up, and the repairmen were busy restoring them. Our arrival made them very happy. Hot food turned out to be very useful for the cold and frozen people who worked on

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open area under the rumble of cannonade and subjected to repeated shelling.

I still took some repairmen into my company, freed them from work in the cold. They went to the squad while the wounds healed, but most often the commander sent them to work prematurely, and kept scolding me for disrupting the performance of combat missions.

Rumors reached here about the death of a female doctor from our medical platoon, but I could not establish which of them died. It happened early in the morning at the beginning of our offensive from a direct hit by a mine. She was torn to shreds.

It's a pity to lose any of my colleagues. But for some reason I didn't want it to be Maya. Not Maya! She must stay alive. Something would come off me if she died.

Lieutenant Colonel Ivanov arrived, and they learned from him about the death of medical instructor Ladna. I was walking at dawn from Maksimov (their relationship was not a secret) to the medical platoon, and along the way the only mine in the area exploded - a direct accidental hit. Her remains were buried in a mass grave on the outskirts of the Voroaponovo station.

The senseless fighting continued. The enemy troops were doomed. They died from cold, hunger, disease. For attempting to surrender, they were shot by their own. Our soldiers also perished, whose lives could have been saved if they had waited at least one or two weeks with the defeat of the "cauldron". (287 people of our brigade alone died in the battles for the liquidation of the enemy grouping in the "cauldron".) The command had other considerations in this regard.

Lieutenant Colonel Ivanov ordered me to stay. The medical platoon is located almost on the open terrain in the hollow.

They set up two tents: a dressing tent and a reception and evacuation tent. The stove was heated only in the dressing room. There was little wood.

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The wounded were brought in, and everyone plunged into work. Gasan-Zade told me that on the first flight I would take the wounded to the medical battalion located in Staro-Dubovka.

Maya came out of the dressing room in a padded jacket, in felt boots, in a hat with earflaps. Bathrobe bloodied in front and on the sleeves, she asked how I was. He said that he barely survived when he learned that one of the female doctors had died. That just did not change my mind. Glad to see her alive. She somehow stared at me very intently and for a long time with a sad smile and said: "Thank you, thank you, my friend, I'm glad to see you too," then she added: "They're waiting for me there," and ran off to the dressing room. Gasan-Zade drove up an ambulance and a truck covered with an awning, and gave the order to load the wounded. He handed me the cards of the advanced district for all the wounded and frostbite.

We were informed that we had finally taken control of the Voroaponovo station and went to Sadovoye. It was in the evening. At this time, I went with the wounded to Peschanka, then turned to Staro-Dubovka, where I handed over the wounded. Here I learned that our brigdoctor Jatiev was there in the morning, but did not stay, and he was taken to the hospital in Beketovka. Therefore, perhaps, the ambulance did not return and Nina. By midnight he returned with two cars to the medical platoon. Another large group of wounded was waiting for us, and I was offered to take them to the medical battalion in the same Staro-Dubovka. Went on the second flight. I really wanted to sleep, with difficulty I tried to stay awake and distract the driver from sleep. At the end of the night they returned to the medical platoon. There were several wounded in the reception and evacuation room. Their flow decreased in the morning. I reported on the arrival and with the driver in the cab of the ambulance, crouched

to each other, fell asleep.

Saturday, January 23, 1943 FROM THE OTHER WORLD.

We fell asleep in the car with the driver and were numb. He woke up earlier, jumped up, stretched himself. He was sorry to wake me up, but then he realized that I could freeze and not wake up, and raised

anxiety. Figured it out in time, because

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I was apparently on the verge of freezing. Around me were Maya, Gasan-Zade, Gomelsky, Shepshelev. It was they who pushed me, pulled me out of the car and tried to put me on my feet, but I could not stand, I sank to the ground. They took me under the armpits and carried me to the dressing room. They took off their overcoat, felt boots, hat, put them on a stretcher and began to break their arms and legs at the joints, crushed the muscles, rubbed the body through the clothes. Shepshelev poured diluted alcohol down his throat. Again, warmth began to spread throughout the body. It came to me, though still vaguely, that something had happened to me. I was forced to drink hot sweet tea. I already understood what was happening to me, but I still could not speak. I felt light and warm. Firewood crackled in the iron stove. Outside the tent, the wind howled with a whistle. These sounds were perceived by the cooling brain as a familiar melody.

Dr Maya kept asking how I felt. I shook her hand, nodded my head in the affirmative, but for some reason the words did not come out. Everyone left the tent. Gomelsky remained near me. He began to tell that Nina arrived in the morning. For more than a day, the ambulance was detained by Dzhatiev, brought to Beketovka and put in a surgical field mobile hospital. The bullet was removed yesterday.

Nina told everyone that she was German. Some kind of sabotage group operating in our rear fired at the car and wounded the brigdoctor. Saboteurs are so saboteurs. And the bullet was really German.

Maya came in, again asked about her well-being, felt her pulse and suggested Gomelsky to walk with me, and then to run. I said that I could do it myself (he spoke at last), got up. I got dizzy. From drunk alcohol or from weakness. Sat. Chilled. It was cold in the tent. He put on boots and an overcoat. Holding on to Gomelsky, he began to walk around the tent, and then went on his own. I rested a bit and went outside. It was a good frost - for twenty. It was easy to breathe. I went into

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evacuation tent. I was greeted noisily, greeted and congratulated on my recovery, as if I had accomplished a feat.

- Alive?

- God bless!

- Look, he's risen.

- What did you see in the other world?

He understood that he must have been freezing, but now he is back in the ranks. It wasn't enough to freeze. And it could happen.

The attention of everyone was diverted from me by the arrival of two cars with the wounded. Modzelevsky brought them. Everyone started doing them. For some reason I was out of work. I was not involved, I tried to help myself, but I was removed from helping the wounded. Apparently, he was unable to work. I was still in a fairly noticeable alcoholic intoxication or general weakness prevailed, which excluded any benefit from me. It began to shiver, there was nowhere to warm up. Gradually came to his senses.

A liaison officer from the brigade headquarters arrived with an order for the medical platoon to leave for a new area - north of Verkhnyaya Elshanka, where the headquarters and combat units of the brigade would be concentrated by the end of the day.

The fees were short. There was only one ambulance left, and it housed the personnel of the medical platoon, mostly women.

- I wanted to see women, I do not allow it. Let's get into this car, - I heard Maya's voice, - don't hesitate, climb in and drag me.

I was at a loss, I thought for a while, and then, apparently, from surprise.

"Don't hesitate, I won't let you freeze," Maya repeated. I don't know what force threw me into the car, I already gave her a hand and pulled her into the car, falling on my back, knocking it over myself. We messed around a little, laughed. Shepshelev did not miss the opportunity to play a joke on us. Together they crawled to the cabin, unfolded the mattresses and arranged a bed for themselves.

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I don't think you'll freeze? she whispered.

"It would be a sin in such a company," I answered in the same whisper.

"And I was very scared for you. The driver came running and reported that you were frozen in the car. So he said that he was no longer alive. Actually, he was on the edge. So you can give up the ends. How could you sleep in a cold car?

- Very tired, did not sleep that night, and the previous ones as well. Thought to take a nap, but fell into the underworld. No, I went to heaven, I saw such a wonderful dream that you can't even tell. I felt so good, in my dream, of course. The most amazing thing is the warmth, the most pleasant warmth. Strange somehow, because it was freezing, but felt warm.

"It's good that everything worked out in reality," she touched her lips to my cheek.

Now I'm in paradise. This is a real paradise, in reality," I said and reached out to her with my lips, looking for her face in the dark, found it - touched her forehead, kissed her eyes, tried to reach her lips with my lips, but she pulled away, quickly spoke:

- No, what are you doing? And she put her hand in front of my face. I began to kiss her hand, pressing it to my lips. She grabbed it.

"Remember, don't lose your head. Calm down. Here I am stupid. Stupid. One more move and I'll jump out of the car. Give me your word that you'll be good!

I was silent. My excitement was betrayed by deep and noisy breathing.

- Calm down and give me your word.

- You kissed me first, and I decided to answer the same. Why are you pushing me away? Are you disgusted?

- I allowed weakness from joy that you did not freeze. I was so scared for you that I lost my head, and you sobered me up with your behavior, and I ask you to behave well.

I still couldn't get enough air, I was breathing more and more noisily, and I burst out:

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\_ I... you are very dear to me, - I blurted out in one breath, - that's my word to you. You better sit here and bear with me.

"If you just let me, I'll jump out." Little boy! How dare you threaten me?

"Sorry, there will be no scandal. I will never say a good word to you again. Live without affection and without good words, if you so desire. That's it, I finished.

- You are stupid. Everything must be in time and place.

— What did I do? Tried to kiss you. And everything. In response to your kindness. What's seditious here? Could this hurt you?

- Let's forget. Calm down.

- Don't leave the conversation. Are you sure that you will have all this: time and place? God bless you to have it all. And I don't know if I will have time and place. Don't know. And you stay smart, bide your time.

"So I'm trying, stupid, to be smart." I will live for the time being in the smart ones and, quite possibly, I will remain in the fools and die a fool. One will be less. Not a big loss.

- You're talking nonsense. You live on earth, but you behave like a resident of heaven. Get down on the ground. Look how much suffering, blood, grief, dirt on it. If a small gap of joy falls, you close yourself from it with both hands. True, just closed with one hand. How good and warm we were, and you let the cold in. In your character, everything good to spoil. The truth is that everyone sees happiness, joy in his own, only his inherent imagination. It's a pity, it's a pity that we don't have a mutual understanding. I'm not talking about more.

"You seem to reproach me for what?" You talk about reciprocity. What if it's not ripe? You will say that war does not have time to ripen. Be quiet! I know what you want to say. It is disgusting to refer to the war that it will write everything off. In my understanding, feelings should mature, and **ONLY THEN IT IS POSSIBLE TO POST THEM.**

— Or maybe they will ripen in the process of laying out?

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- Tell me what you...

"Enough pitying, take me in." We are now moving off," Shepshelev's voice rang out. And he fell into the body, crawled up to us - move apart and warm me. Frozen as hell. Well, your lair is warm, - and he climbed between us. Shepshelev was talking about something, Maya was laughing. You might think that he is very glad to come. What they were talking about, I didn't hear, I thought about my own. Maya dragged me into the back, kissed me, which means she is not indifferent to her. Why did she resist reciprocal caresses? Scared of something, scared of yourself? It was not the first time that she erected a barrier between us and, as if on purpose, destroyed the warm feelings that arose between us. How to understand it?

The car did not stop, tossed us over bumps, but kept warm in our hole. Shepshelev squeezed between me and Maya. I no longer felt her warmth. But our breath created one microclimate. Or maybe it's good that he fell on our heads. Our argument has gone too far. What could we talk about next? Perhaps he led us out of a dead end.

So, without moving, having warmed up, in a few hours we arrived in Upper Elshanka. Got out of the body. They stood near dilapidated and burning houses. Dr. Gasan-Zade asked about my well-being - he replied that everything had already passed. He took me with him to look for and find a room for the medical platoon. Our units went to Stalingrad, rear units remained here. We found a suitable large house with outbuildings. There was a business group there. Gasan-Zade told them that a medical platoon of tankers would be stationed here, and they gave up the house. He left me, and he went for the cars. After some time, they began to enter the yard. Suddenly, the assistant chief of staff of our brigade appeared, examined the house and said that the headquarters of the brigade would be located here. Gasan-Zade grappled with him, continued to drive cars into the yard. Assistant on-

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The chief of staff urged him to look for another place for a medical platoon. Staff cars drove up and began to install telephones, pull cables, demolish property.

"Ah, colleague, I love military life," Gasan-Zade exclaimed in the hearts, "strangers yielded, they drove out their own. The one who has more rights is right.

We went to look for another place for the medical platoon.

Sunday, January 24, 1943 STREET FIGHTS START.

The medical platoon was located on the western outskirts of Upper Elshanka. With Hasan-Zade's permission, I went to my repairmen. Many needed medical attention, which I did. Was glad to meet. They did a lot of work in very difficult conditions. Frozen, half-starved. They were never put on allowance in any unit. Yes, and it turned out to be difficult, since they often changed their place, their number changed. And so they managed with dry rations, sometimes they managed to cook something and eat hot.

By the beginning of the street fighting in Stalingrad, the brigade received additional tanks with crews. Our combat units are already engaged in street fighting on the southwestern outskirts of Stalingrad. Very heavy fighting is going on in the area of the NKVD house, which our brigade is supposed to take possession of. Went the flow of the wounded. The troops have to dismantle the rubble, barriers. Streets, houses, passages between them were mined. Enemy tanks or guns fired at point-blank range from courtyards, entrances of houses, where guns and mortars were still being installed. The snipers were aiming fire and incapacitating our people.

The combat situation showed that tanks could not be used for street fighting. They were a convenient target for defeat, and the enemy incapacitated them in significant numbers - knocked out and burned.

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Increasingly, groups of prisoners escorted by our escorts began to meet.

I didn't go to the medical platoon anymore. I stayed overnight in Sargsyan's cabin, stuffed to capacity. At least I'll sit in the warmth, and maybe I'll manage to take a nap.

Monday, January 25, 1943 PILES OF EARTH, METAL AND BODIES.

Our company and the warehouses of the brigade arrived in Verkhnyaya Elshanka. After lunch, the company commander arrived, called all the commanders. Ordered to prepare for the march. The combat units of the brigade fought stubborn street battles on the southwestern outskirts of Stalingrad. They occupied seven streets, seized the house of the NKVD, went to the railway bridge on the Tsaritsa River. We will be located on the outskirts of Stalingrad. We will set up workshops there. There are many wrecked tanks, and upon arrival we will immediately start repairing them.

From the appearance of the road they followed and the surrounding area, one can only imagine what happened here. Earth pitted with shells and bombs, frontiers outside, fortified areas. Twisted gouges, torn pieces of barbed wire, heaps of mangled military equipment: tanks, cars, cannons. And against the background of all this - frozen corpses in different poses. Corpses, corpses, an infinite number of corpses... Special funeral teams were engaged in their sorting.

I spent the rest of the night in Sargsyan's cabin, in which I came here. Burned all night stove.



When I fell into a doze, the corpses in the piles began to move, crawl out, many climbed on me, and I woke up in horror. This happened several times when I started to fall asleep. He was already afraid to fall asleep, it was impossible to stay in the flight room, since everything was sinking into sleep. No matter how sorry it was to part with the warmth - I got out of the booth on a frosty

street.

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Tuesday, January 26, 1943 FANATICS.

The enemy is divided into two groups: northern and southern. The brigade fought together with other units and formations of the 64th Army against the southern group. The enemy continued to stubbornly resist, putting out of action our tanks and other military equipment and personnel. And he himself in the vast majority died in battle, but did not surrender. Many wounded and sick, and continued to fight ...

Stubborn battles for every street, every house were going on nearby. Continuous, day and night. The divisions of the brigade and many other units were all trampling around the railway bridge over the Tsaritsa River and could not take it in any way. Ours lost five tanks on the approaches to the bridge. It is impossible to pull them to a safe place for repairs because of the massive shelling from the enemy. Our aviation bombed the northern bank of the river, and the enemy continued to hold it and inflict damage on our advancing units.

Wednesday, January 27, 1943 HEAVY FIGHTS FOR THE BRIDGE.

The workshops were repairing wheeled vehicles. Not a single tank. Military engineer Voropaev arrived for spare parts and food. He told me that many repairmen needed medical help and he would ask the commander to send me with him. I started getting ready. I added dressings and some medicines to my bag. He threw a can of canned food, crackers into a duffel bag. We left before lunch. Sat in the back, covered himself with a tarpaulin.

If whole houses and yards were still preserved in our area, then solid ruins soon appeared before our eyes. Often a spacious Russian oven stood as a monument among the ruins. The road passed in places through the former courtyards, squares, not observing the direction of the streets.

The fights were very close. We moved past the military units located here. Not only rear

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units, and combat units. There were artillery batteries, anti-aircraft installations and tanks of other units.

I was very cold, wrapped myself more carefully in a tarpaulin, but I felt that my every bone was freezing through. After the case of "freezing", I developed an increased sensitivity to cold, constant chilliness. The car stopped. Voropaev got out of the cab, told me where our medical platoon was located nearby, pointing in the direction of one yard. I told him that I was stiff in the back, I was cold, that I needed to warm up, warm up. He got off the car and began to bounce, run around it, until he warmed up a little. Again he climbed into the body, wrapped himself in a tarpaulin from an awning, and drove off. further.

Soon we arrived at the location of our repairmen, a shallow gully with a preserved footbridge across it. To the left of the bridge, near the steeper bank, there were two wrecked tanks and several wheeled vehicles. The place is convenient, the hit of an artillery shell was excluded, but it did not guarantee against mines. Our group was engaged in the restoration of this equipment. Frozen, frost on hats, collars, snowdrifts, drifting snow. Periodically they warmed up in the little tent behind the hillock. They gave me tea and immediately started serving it.

medical care in one of the flights. They all came to me with the same thing: festering abrasions on the fingers and palms, boils, frostbite on the skin of the face, fingers of the extremities. The abrasions healed poorly and festered for a very long time.

Our units, including the brigade, were trampling around the railway bridge. The northern shore was high and steep, the southern shore was gently sloping. Everything was visible from above, every section on the southern coast was shot, and the attacks of our troops had not been successful for several days. Many of our soldiers died here. In the morning, under the cover of several tanks, infantry stormed the bridge. Heavy fire stopped the advance. Of the four wrecked tanks

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kov managed to evacuate one. Sasha Tsvetkov did it on his tractor.

I stayed overnight in the cabin. With the onset of darkness, work ceased. The fires were not lit. They promised to bring dinner in thermoses, but it did not work out. Left without hot. Some gnawed crackers and washed down with water from flasks, who had them. I sat in the bottom seat in the corner, curled up in a ball and tried to sleep. The dream did not last long. All around was the snoring and sniffing of people closely pressed against each other. They sat on side benches and on the floor. They lay on the workbench, on the middle and upper shelves. It was warm and stuffy from the mere breath and fumes. The oven was still on. But they didn't die.

Thursday, January 28, 1943 THE BRIDGE IS FINALLY OBTAINED.

Sad news came to us at dawn. Engineer Lieutenant Colonel Ivanov, the brigade's deputy technical officer, died. He was our most direct boss. Much of our work was connected with him. The details of the death were not known. They spoke differently. Violent battles continued nearby, the cannonade did not subside all night and continued now. By this time, it became known that our troops had finally captured the railway bridge across the Tsaritsa River and went to the central part of the city, where the fiercest battle continued. Many people are dying on both sides. The attack of the sailors of the 143rd Naval Brigade, with which our brigade also interacted, played a decisive role in capturing the bridge. At night, the sailors penetrated the flank and rear of the enemy grouping. Ours hit in the forehead, and in hand-to-hand combat, and where the enemy was completely destroyed by grenades in the area of the bridge.

Voropaev and Tsvetkov, who arrived for spare parts, reported the details of Ivanov's death. There was another attack of our troops after a short artillery and mortar treatment of the higher left bank. The tanks of our brigade went ahead, and behind them

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followed by infantry units. The enemy was enough to stop this attack. He still possessed quite strong fire weapons. The area in front of the bridge on the right bank was open, and the advancing units were clearly visible on the snow-covered field, which the enemy took advantage of. There were many of our corpses on the approaches to the bridge. The living and some of the wounded, who could, crawled back to their original positions. Enemy snipers did not allow picking up the wounded. Attempts to do so increased the death toll. Finished his job and frost. Two hundred meters from the observation post, one of the T-70 tanks flared up and exploded. Not far from him, our second T-34 tank stopped. The rest went over the hill. The crew did not leave the tank. Lieutenant Colonel Ivanov reached our repair team from the observation post and ordered Voropaev to drag this tank to cover. The driver of the tractor, Tsvetkov, advanced several times towards the wrecked tank, but shots from the opposite bank forced him to stop. The firing of mortars and machine guns began from our side as well. At this time, the Red Army soldier Kamalov, who was following with a tractor, threw out the cable and crawled towards the wrecked tank. Ten meters did not crawl. Startled, rolled over on his back and fell silent.

The brigade commander, Lieutenant Colonel Sadovsky, ordered that one of the doctors be sent to drag the Red Army soldier and help him. Of the doctors at the observation post, there was

sanitary instructor from the medical platoon. He was ordered to go. He slung a sanitary bag over his shoulder, tumbled over the parapet of the trench, and crawled towards the wounded man. Having passed more than half the way, the medical instructor froze, sprawled on the snow.

"I ask you to pull out the wounded and provide them with medical assistance," the brigade commander ordered.

There was no one from the doctors at the observation post, which was reported to him. Then they noticed that Lieutenant Colonel Ivanov crawled to the wrecked tank. At the shout of the command

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he did not respond to the brigade to return. The brigade commander ordered to open fire from all available means on the opposite high bank in order to make it impossible to make aimed shots at Ivanov. He passed by the medical instructor, touched him and crawled to the Red Army repairman. I took the end of the cable from him and continued to crawl towards the tank. A few meters from the wrecked tank, the lieutenant colonel froze and no longer moved. Those who watched them realized that the lieutenant colonel had also been killed by a sniper bullet.

"Immediately pull out the lieutenant colonel," Sadovsky ordered. The head of the political department, battalion commissar Maksimov, told Sadovsky that a sniper in disguise was sitting somewhere and would put everyone out of action, that he had to wait until dark, especially since it was already dusk. We waited for darkness and pulled out three corpses. The crew of the wrecked tank survived, but representatives of the special department took care of them, since they stopped firing at the enemy, at a time when the cannon and machine gun of the tank were in good order and had a sufficient supply of ammunition.

We were buried in the morning. Among several dozen mounds on the right bank of the Tsaritsa River, they found their last refuge. With three volleys from carbines, against the background of the cannonade of ongoing street fighting, we honored the memory of our fellow soldiers. Will these graves be preserved for their relatives, who will tell them about it? How many nameless mounds that sheltered our dead soldiers are scattered across the boundless snow-covered Volga steppe? Who will count them and will there be traces? Many of them will be missing, as is usually the case in official reports. And for relatives and for descendants, they will be forever missing in this war.

Increasingly, groups of captured Germans began to come across. They can count on the preservation of life, although their appearance is terrible, and it is unlikely that these could continue resistance. What do others think, what else do they hope for?

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Ammunition, it is felt, they still have enough, and the defense is thought out. They do not voluntarily surrender to captivity - a hopeless situation compels them. In all likelihood, the German command still held its troops tightly in its hands.

On the right bank of the Tsaritsa River, a quarter of a kilometer from the bridge, a collection point was set up for the wounded by the medical forces of our two tank battalions. The conditions are terrible. The wind with snow blew through the space, it was frost for twenty. There were wounded and doctors almost in the open area. We did not expect that we would have to linger at the bridge for several days.

Hot food and tea were brought in thermoses, and people were warmed by this. We tried, as far as possible, not to detain the wounded here. The wounded were brought here from other units, using drag sleds for this. Many of the wounded were dragged on raincoats and overcoats through the snow. All this space was shot through from the left high bank, and the wounded were dragged on their feet. From the collection point they were sent to the medical platoon by battalion transport, more often passing. Ambulances were used to evacuate the wounded to the medical battalion or hospital.

Friday, January 29, 1943 I escort the wounded.

Even before dawn, they woke me up and said that the company commander was calling. It was dark, and it seemed that he had just fallen asleep. Settled down for the night in a repair box at the bottom of the body, on a tarpaulin, between spare parts, next to some repairman. The workbench, side benches, and upper folding shelves were occupied by regular guests. He lay in an overcoat, felt boots, a hat. The belt only unfastened, but did not remove from the belt. Under the head is a sanitary bag. It was dark and smoky. The iron stove was red-hot. Cold and fresh frosty air wafted from under the doors. I was glad of this haven, where I could stretch out to my full height. But I had to get out into the cold, which

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immediately captured and fettered everything. K. was also engulfed by a biting wind with fine snow, which picked up and began to ruffle the skirts of his overcoat.

He put himself in order: tightened his belt, put on a gas mask and a sanitary bag over his shoulder, moved the holster with a pistol to his right thigh, knocked on the commander's booth and reported that I was listening to him. The commander invited me in and said that I would go with him. He will take me to the medical platoon, where I will help them in their work. I received an order about this from the headquarters of the brigade. He added that there are many wounded, the surviving doctors are coping with difficulty. He remarked with malice that he must have slept off in the summer camp and it was time to join the hotter business. He ordered me to sit in the back of his lorry.

Got into the body. After the heat, the flyers began to feel chilly. He covered himself with a tarpaulin, but it did not get warmer. The car started moving. I didn't see the road. The car was thrown in all directions, I was rocking on the body. After some time, they began and I heard: "We have arrived, come out!"

I got down and wrinkled, frozen trudged after him. Not far away were the ruins of large houses, they walked past broken and burnt buildings, past a number of dugouts, dugouts. Doctor Gasan-Zade was found in the tent, and my commander ironically reported to him that he had brought reinforcements. Wishing us success, he left us and departed for the command post of the brigade.

Doctor Gasan-Zade, instead of "Hello," blurted out at me point-blank:

You will take the wounded to the hospitals. Someone became. Ivanov is no more, you know? We all have work to do, we are suffocating," he pointed with his thumb along his throat.

- There is work here! - I answered in full.

- That's it. Help load the wounded. You will take them to Kuporosnoye. There is closer, and there is a surgical hospital. As soon as the car is loaded, you will immediately go.

A reception and evacuation tent was set up, where dressings were done. I went into the tent. All was forced

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stretchers with the wounded lying on them. Some sat on stretchers and on boxes in the corners of the tent. Iron stoves were heated in both tents, but it was quite cold, a little above zero.

We learned from the wounded that our soldiers were fighting near the hospital, in the central part of the southern half of the city. They operate jointly with the 143rd Naval Brigade and units of the 422nd Rifle Division. We came across the wounded from these units, and some of ours got to them in Mmedsanbat.

We loaded two ambulances and one flatbed truck and drove south to Kuporosnoye. He grabbed for everyone the completed "cards of the advanced area" - a kind of brief case histories. The road, like everything after the recent battles, is terribly broken, covered in snow and snowdrifts, hard to see in a snowstorm.

In less than two hours we reached Kuporosnoye. Without red tape, I handed over the wounded to the HPPG. One of the wounded in the stomach was dead.

Upon arrival at the medical platoon, I learned that our troops had occupied the hospital and were continuing to fight in the street for houses located near the Stalingrad-2 city station, interacting with the Marine Corps brigade and units of the infantry DIVISION.

The ambulance with which he arrived was immediately loaded with very seriously wounded, and we were immediately sent. Among them were wounded in the stomach and chest. They needed urgent specialized medical care, and they were not detained in the medical platoon. We were on the road for about an hour and a half. These seriously ill patients died on the way from internal bleeding and shock. Although they were wrapped in cotton envelopes, they were still very cold. He left all the wounded and dead in the HPPG and left for the medical platoon, where he arrived after lunch. We drank boiling water with the driver from a kettle that stood on the stove in the tent, but did not get warm. There was nothing left of dinner. I went to the "male" dugout, where the stove was heated and it was possible to warm up. Sat down on a box, warmly exhausted me and

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sitting, must have dozed off. Shepshelev woke me up. He says that he was shaking for a long time, but I keep snoring, but I don't wake up.

— The wounded have been brought in, get up, help unload and prepare for evacuation. You will take.

He got up with difficulty. As he was in his overcoat, he went to the bucket, filled a mug of water, rinsed his hands, washed his eyes, cheeks, nose and dried himself with a piece of bandage. I don't remember how many days I didn't take off my overcoat. He took off his felt boots, rewound the footcloths, which were lumped together. Came out of the dugout. Breath caught in the cold. He began to help carry the wounded. Gasan-Zade briefly examined all the wounded in the first tent and indicated who should be sent to the dressing room, and ordered the rest to be immediately bandaged and the bandages corrected. Many bandages, soaked in blood, froze, they began to be changed, which again caused bleeding. And left Willy.

Someone had to fix or re-apply tires. I did this with Shepshelev. Lyuba, Maya and Nina worked in the dressing room. These wounded came from the area of the city station. They were mostly tankers, many with burns. It is hard to imagine what kind of torment and suffering they endured. Burning clothes and a burning body. To undress in such a severe frost in order to bandage the affected parts of the body, they did not dare on the battlefield.

Some had bandages over their overalls. Overcoats or sheepskin coats could not be put on over the bandages, and the wounded, in addition to everything else, were still freezing. They did not strip naked, so as not to cause additional injuries and suffering. They bandaged them, gave them hot tea, and assigned them for evacuation. They were seriously wounded in the thigh and abdomen.

I was ordered to take them. We loaded the wounded into two ambulances, and without delay we set out in the direction of Kuporosnoye along the already familiar road. At the time of departure, dinner was brought. We took pots of porridge with us to

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cabin and with the driver somehow ate on the go. Time was precious for the wounded, and we were in a hurry. They were there in an hour and a half. Wounded in the stomach, he died on the way. One of the burnt ones became very heavy. He handed over the wounded and the deceased to the same HPPG. This time, the drivers and I fed me hot dinner for miles. We could not refuse, I really wanted to eat.

They safely returned to the medical platoon around midnight. The way back was faster - a little over an hour, despite the night. Visibility was quite satisfactory - white snow all around, and the moon illuminated the way.

We went to warm ourselves in the "male" dugout. There they learned that the southern grouping of enemy troops was divided into two more parts and they are finishing it off. Ours broke into the territory of the station, but were driven back. They fought directly at its walls. Large groups of Germans began to surrender. They got there too late.

Gradually I warmed up, began to feel sleepy and must have begun to doze off, but Dr. Hasan Zade came in and said that brigdoctor Jatiev was summoning me to the "women's" dugout. It turns out that he arrived in the evening after the treatment for the ill-fated wound. I went and reported. He greeted me warmly, asked how things were going with me, and, without listening to the end, said that I would go with him right now to the command post of the brigade. He needs to report to the brigade commander that he has returned to duty, and I will take the wounded on the return flight. We'll go by ambulance. Hell, it was even warm. The bat lamp was on. Nurse Nina, his wife, doctors Lyuba and Maya were sitting. Nina offered me a mug of tea, moved a pan with crackers. Jatiev offered to sit down, and I, of course, could not refuse them. They were all without overcoats, in quilted jackets. I asked permission to take off my overcoat. It became easier for the back, lower back from hanging bags, belts. Maya looked very tired, like everyone else. Apparently, only now they managed to get together and rest, while the flow of wounded stopped, although they were waiting from minute to minute.

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But even now, to the north-west of us in the city, volleys of guns, explosions were heard - there were battles, and, therefore, the wounded would come.

"It's good for you, but you have to go, get dressed in the car," Jatiev told me. And I jumped up, put on my overcoat, fastened my belt with a holster, thanked them, saluted the women and left the dugout into the frosty night. Artillery cannonade was heard more and more distinctly in a northwestern direction - in Stalingrad. There was no end to the battle.

Saturday, January 30, 1943 STORM OF THE CITY STATION STALINGRAD-2.

I went into the "men's" dugout, took a gas mask and a sanitary bag, put them on over my shoulder, said goodbye to Shepshelev and Gasan-Zade, told them that I was going with Dzhatiev and went to the car. I fell into the arms of a frosty night; Around white-white from snowdrifts, snow-covered dugouts, dugouts. The full moon illuminated the southern outskirts of Stalingrad with a pale light. The skeletons of large and small houses shone through, some ruins smoked. And the cannonade that did not stop not far away reminded us that the enemy had not yet been destroyed.

From the "women's" dugout came a figure in a cap with earflaps with lowered flaps-ears, in felt boots, in a sheepskin coat draped over his shoulders. Headed in my direction. It was Maya.

"Take care of yourself, my dear man. Already the end of the nightmare. Only a day or two left. Be careful. I beg you," and two hands reached out to me. The short fur coat began to slip off his shoulders. He grabbed and pressed him along with Maya to himself. Her arms wrapped around my neck. We clung to each other. Her head rested on my chest. She lifted her face. The hat fell into the snow. She turned to face me. I bent down, found her lips, and we froze in a long kiss. Then

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began to kiss her eyes, forehead, hair. She was the first to throw back her head, stare at me, and say:

— Take care of yourself, I will pray to God to keep you alive, and now let me go.

He let her go with a sheepskin coat, draped it more comfortably over her shoulders. He took out a hat from the snow, shook it off and put it on her head. At this time, the Jatievs came out of the dugout, accompanied by Nina.

[Me driver?

I ran to the "male" dugout and called out to the driver. Doctor Hasan-Zade followed him. We said goodbye, and we drove off into the snowy night, in the direction of the ever resounding cannonade.

- We, colleague, would not get hit by a stray shell, as I already got hit by a bullet.

- It does not depend on us. Of course, it is undesirable, - I found an answer.

He doesn't know that I know how he got hurt. It was in the same car and with the same driver. Let it be as he wants.

I was still under the impression of farewell to Maya. I did not expect such warmth and affection from her. There was some kind of impulse, a surge of feelings or a bad feeling, or sisterly care, or just a desire for a happy outcome ... I don't know, but a kiss? No one has kissed me like this before.

Jatiev was talking about something with the driver, and the meaning of the conversation did not immediately reach me. He was worried that they would not stop by the Germans, he asked if he was sure that we would get to the command post of the brigade? The driver assured us that we were driving correctly, that we had already been there several times. The area around was clearly visible, many troops surrounded us, and all this lived and moved. Many bonfires burned around which the soldiers warmed themselves. Light masking was not observed. The further we went, the denser the military units and military equipment stood. Along the way there were many artillery positions with cannons of various calibers and anti-aircraft guns. There was thick snow, gusts of force rushed

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wind. In the light of the headlights, signs of just past battles were distinguished. They walked past blown up and uprooted defensive lines, gouges, caponiers, broken military equipment, the skeletons of dilapidated houses, ruins of buildings. We walked past the positions of firing cannons, the shells of which were bursting somewhere ahead. The fighting didn't stop. It was long past midnight when we arrived at the area where the command post of the brigade was located in one of the basements of the broken house. The headquarters was nearby. We were surrounded by the skeletons and boxes of destroyed houses with ominously gaping openings of windows and balconies. Many troops seemed to be dispersed everywhere they could stumble. And that's all — on the snow-covered streets, in the ruins, in the cellars.

The driver took Jatiev to the location of the command post and quickly returned. He showed me where the hospital was located, which the soldiers of our brigade had seized the day before, and the city station Stalingrad-2, which should be taken by our brigade together with other units. In this operation, our tank brigade will interact with the brigade of marines and the rifle division, or rather, with its remnants. All these units are significantly weakened by past battles, they are few in number, they have lost a lot of personnel and equipment. They were supposed to take possession only of the station, and for the past laziness they could not do this. It is hard to imagine what other resistance the enemy can offer. What madness to resist when there is no chance for the enemy to win. There is no doubt that the battle for Stalingrad is ending, why so many more victims? How cruel this is...

Jatiev came up to us. He said that he reported his arrival to the operational duty officer, the brigade commander is busy with the commanders of the tank regiment, battalions, some heads of services and representatives of other units with whom they will interact during the storming of the station. Develop the details of the assault. The commander of the 64th Army ordered to take possession of station

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and clear it from the enemy. Dzhatiev decided to look at the combined medical post of the gun regiment and battalions deployed in one of the basements, as he said, two hundred meters from the station.

The driver knew this place. The car was parked behind the wall of a dilapidated house, where ambulances and trucks of the brigade stood. The driver took us up a steep staircase to the basement. There I met the senior doctor of the tank regiment, whom I saw for the first time, the military assistant of our first tank battalion and other doctors.

The basement was lit with one bat lamp and two artillery shells. An overheated iron stove stood in a corner, and a chimney went out into one of the vents. A kettle of water boiled. It was cold in the basement, although the stove was blazing with heat. The cellar vents were without glass, and many without frames. Some were filled with plywood, boards. It was drenched, and there was snow in places. Stretchers stood along the wall, some of them on the goats replaced the dressing tables. Two folding tables. One with medicines, the other with dressings and medical instruments.

Dressing solutions were on the floor near the stove. Several stretchers were strung out between crates, on which splints and dressings were laid out.

Medical boxes were stacked along the walls, on which sleeping bags lay in bulk. This is what the medical center looked like. How much help can be provided under these conditions? How to drag the wounded here through the rubble and this steep staircase? Jatiev began to scold the doctor for such a primitive appearance of the medical center. He said that it was necessary to have more folding tables, a goat, kettles for making tea for the wounded. He offered to immediately dismantle the rubble and clean the stairs for the convenience of descending and carrying out the wounded.

It is good to scold someone from a commanding height. Did anyone provide them with all this? They have only one ambulance and one transport. And what they have is hard to transport. He promised to send transport vehicles for

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evacuation of the wounded and with a frustrated look left, leaning on a stick. Then I came out of the basement, went to my car, sat next to the driver. He must have been dozing, raised his head and said:

"The assault will begin soon. It will get hot. We should go somewhere in the basement or behind a strong wall. He will not give a damn about mines here either.

Around there was an active movement of troops. They installed guns and mortars. An anti-aircraft gun was rolled out and its barrel was directed towards the station, the contours of which were clearly visible in the darkness among other houses.

Short pops, and rockets soared into the sky. Some hung in the air on parachutes, illuminating the area around.

square...

In the reflections of searchlights, suddenly heard explosions of shells and mines, machine-gun trills and automatic bursts on the square in front of the station, a round dance of dancing children's figures around a frozen fountain was lit up on a hill. Dance to menacing music and the glare of chiaroscuro war...

Volleys rang out around us. The cannons spewed fire, the rumble and whistle of shells swept over us. All this collapsed on the station and the square around it. And in this accompaniment of fire and explosions, the frantic dance of the figures continued. Death dance?

The driver and I jumped out of the basement, clung to the wall of the house opposite the station, then made our way into the basement above the basement and hid against the wall between two windows. The station was silent, as if there was no one there. Artillery cannonade from our side was still going on, when they heard the roar of the engines of the tanks going to the station. Under their cover, in dense groups, submachine gunners of the Marine Corps marched in black jackets. We started talking



the windows and entrances of the railway station, throwing mines, grenades, automatic bullets into the assault columns. From the assault groups fell out one by one

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other figures of sailors and black marks on the freshly fallen pure white snow paved the road to the station.

... The dancing figures did not stop their dance and in the reflections of the flashes of explosions they danced even more furiously in spite of death, the dance of life ...

The assault groups of the rifle division went and, shouting "Hurrah-ah-ah-ah!", rushed after the sailors. The tanks came close to the station building. Grenades, containers and bottles with a combustible mixture flew from the windows. Cars were on fire, the area was on fire. From the explosions of shells and fire, the snow around was melting. The night receded. Not all soldiers in gray overcoats reached the station. Many of them mingled in the square with the black figures of the fallen sailors.

In the fireworks of flame and smoke, the dancing figures continued their dance... Our submachine gunners climbed onto the armor of the tanks, threw grenades at the windows and balconies, and penetrated the building, where a hand-to-hand fight began for every landing, every floor. Grenades, bayonets, butts, knives, sapper shovels were used. Our soldiers all seeped into the station building, where the battle continued.

The night receded. Rare single shots and automatic bursts were still heard on the upper floors. Near the walls of the station, three of our tanks were on fire - the last vehicles of the tank brigade.

With the coming dawn, the forecourt area began to appear in the smoke, covered with the bodies of our dead soldiers and the wounded crying for help. Orderlies on drags or right on their overcoats dragged them over the ruins of houses, then delivered them to medical stations deployed nearby.

... With the dawn, the exhausted round dance of dancing figures, shrouded in thick smoke, began to slow down its predetermined dance...

With the arrival of the wounded in the basement, I also joined in providing them with medical care. After what

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were placed in the opposite side of the basement on a stretcher, on cotton envelopes. Walkers were located on boxes. Here they were prepared for evacuation to field mobile hospitals, given boiled water with sugar, breadcrumbs, porridge delivered in thermoses from the field kitchen. Then they carried them out on stretchers and loaded the heavier ones into an ambulance, and the rest into trucks covered with an awning. In cars, they tried to cover the wounded from the cold as much as they could. The frost significantly aggravated their condition. The second flight with the wounded at the end of the battle for the station was accompanied by me. Not everyone was able to be transported alive to hospitals. Some died on the way from large blood loss, shock and complications due to severe hypothermia. In severe frost around the wounds, frozen blood formed an ice crust or shell, under which bleeding continued. The bloody masses of ice contributed to frostbite, especially of the extremities.

The battle for the station subsided. By the end of the battle, some of the resisting Germans began to surrender. Those who continued to resist were destroyed. From the stories of prisoners of war, it turned out that those who tried to surrender before and during the battle were shot by their own.

When shots were still heard on the upper floors, a group of medical workers leaked from the medical battalion of the rifle division to the station and set up a first-aid post in the side wing of the first floor, where our wounded were bandaged. Nearby, the wounded were carried into the next room.

Germans, among whom were many frostbitten. A specially allocated group of our physicians, together with the Germans, provided them with medical assistance. That was the command's decision.

Groups of prisoners were taken out of the entrances. These creatures of the human race represented a miserable sight. On the head are scarves, scarves, towels over uniform caps. Some have blankets on their shoulders over their overcoats. Shoes wrapped in rags, straw.

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Tanks, wheeled vehicles and other military equipment burned down around the station. From some of the windows clouds of smoke spread and enveloped the station square, covered with our soldiers lying motionless, already covered with snow. Maybe some of them still glimmered with life... This was found out by the orderlies, who were still making their way among them, and representatives of the funeral team, who removed the corpses from the square and the approaches to it.

The dead soldiers, ours and the Germans, were taken out of the station building, loaded onto various transport vehicles and taken away separately.

... The picture of the battle, death, corpses in the square and the wounded crying out for help, frozen in the cold, plunged the dance of dancing figures into horror, they slowed down their dance and stopped with the onset of dawn. After all, all these fallen warriors, possibly not kissed, could enter their round dance and share a dance with them for the glory of life, but they will not get up, having not danced their life-affirming dance. They were kissed by death. From everything they saw and experienced, the figurines froze and petrified in the eternal round dance around the fountain on the forecourt of the city station Stalingrad-2...

People! Stop, do not pass by this monument — a fountain with petrified children's figurines dancing around it. They witnessed the Battle of Stalingrad that took place here in 1943, which became a turning point in the Second World War - the beginning of the complete defeat of the Nazi troops. They saw at what a terrible price the victory came, and they could have told a lot if they had not been petrified by everything they saw and experienced.

And the fountain in the center of the round dance is the tears of mothers, wives, children and loved ones of our soldiers who died here in the Battle of Stalingrad for the honor, freedom and independence of our Motherland, as well as the tears of relatives and friends of the dead soldiers and officers of the occupiers of different peoples and countries at

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the banks of the Volga, the land of which accepted forever indiscriminately the ashes of their own and others.

The dance of dancing children in the midst of the chaos of war, suffering and death must forever become a symbol of the senselessness of war, the madness and crime of the statesmen unleashing it, a symbol of the return to this war-torn world of children's joy, dances and

laughter.

In memory of those killed in the Battle of Stalingrad, place flowers on the fountain bowl.

For the sake of the future, remember the past!

Sunday, January 31, 1943 DAR MOUNTAIN.

Yesterday I made three flights with the wounded to the hospital. On the first flight I went to the medical platoon. Colleagues surrounded me. "As there?" asked their gaze. He said that the station must have already been taken, that all our doctors were alive, that the Germans were surrendering and that the war must be over on our sector of the front. Met Maya's eyes - they were full of tears, presumably from joy. After filling out the advanced area cards and providing opportunities in these

conditions of medical care, right in the cold, I took them to Kuporosnoye, but there the hospital was overcrowded and I was sent to Beketovka. It was snowing heavily, the road was covered, often skidding, freezing. How did the wounded, when the healthy could hardly withstand this cold?

Not all the wounded were brought to Beketovka alive. I handed them over to the HPPG and returned to our medical platoon. From there I was sent with the same cars to the station area. The fighting has already ended there. The brigade's first tank and motorized rifle machine-gun battalions were fighting with disparate resisting enemy groups in the center of the southern part of the city. In the basement of the joint first-aid post, there were many wounded who had to be evacuated. I made two more flights to Beketovka, bypassing the medical platoon. There was no point in going to the medical platoon with them. There they were not able

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to provide proper assistance, and he won valuable time in favor of the wounded, besides, the road to Beketovka was straighter and shorter.

Late in the evening, after returning from the third flight, I learned that all the commanders were at a meeting with the chief of staff. At the end, I found my commander, reported to him and asked how I should proceed. He replied that I would go with him to the company, and ordered to wait in the dugout of the technical part of the brigade.

Our captured one thousand two hundred enemy soldiers and officers, together with interacting units.

After some time, the commander came for me and led me to the parked cars. He arrived in the flying car in which he lived. I knocked and it was opened to us. Get inside. There I saw a sleepy Kalmykov. I asked him about the affairs of the company, told him what I had seen and experienced during this time. The car was moving in the dark, we were thrown in all directions. Kalmykov pointed out to me on the opposite bench where the mattress lay. I lay down, as I was, in my overcoat. He put the sanitary bag under his head and fell sound asleep. Woke up when it stopped throwing the car. She stood. It turned out that they arrived in the company.

Mikhailovsky knocked on the door, Kalmykov opened it. The cold squeezed his throat, he coughed.

- We've arrived! Mikhailovsky announced. But there won't be a resort. Come out doctor. Again we have a road, get ready.

Mikhailovsky ordered the sentry to send a company duty officer. I got out of the booth. The darkness of the night dissipated, dawn came. The full moon illuminated the huts, buried in snowdrifts. Surprisingly, there was a lot of snow around, in contrast to Stalingrad, where it was trampled down or melted from hot battles.

The commander ordered to announce the rise of the personnel. I called all the commanders of platoons and squads near the car and set the task. Its essence boiled down to the fact that urgently load the cars and after breakfast leave for a new area. The first flight is the entire personnel and

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repair equipment, the second - warehouses. Start loading immediately.

There was a general revival among the personnel. We were glad that the hostilities in Stalingrad were coming to an end. A few days remained before the final defeat of the enemy.

After breakfast, the column of our cars went in the direction of the city. I was sitting in the cab of the truck. The road was already far from the steppe. Mostly they walked along the beaten track. More and more often we saw the ruins of former settlements, blown up, mangled defensive lines, broken military equipment and corpses, frozen corpses of enemy soldiers and officers. walked

towards ambulances, trucks and wagons with the wounded. There are more and more parking lots for military units, and most of them are on the street. Anti-aircraft guns, tanks, mortars, artillery batteries.

Columns of prisoners of war began to meet. We often stopped - the roads were clogged with troops. A few hours later we reached the location of our technical support group.

Everyone was very upset. In the morning, explosions of several mines in the group's location killed one and wounded two repairmen. Some random mines flew in. There were no hostilities nearby. It must have been a small group of Germans hiding in the ravines that fired a few mines and they found their victims. The wounded were taken to the medical platoon, and the dead lay here, wrapped in a tarpaulin. The commander ordered to take the corpse of the deceased with him, said that we would bury it near the railway bridge, where many of our brigade were buried. The repairmen of the group were ordered to dive and follow the column. Our path continued along the roads and along the impassability of the just past battle. Our comrade was buried near the bridge across the river Tsaritsa. With difficulty, they dug a hole in the frozen ground. There was one more mound with a sign of the buried.

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A volley of carbines sounded as a tradition and memory of the deceased. The column continued to the northeast. Fighting was still going on in the city in some places, somewhere to the north. There were bomb attacks, artillery fire and explosions of artillery shells, min.

In the afternoon we stopped in a suburb of Stalingrad called Dar-[Mountain. There were many military units around. Some of our units were already located here: the headquarters of the brigade, the medical platoon. In the morning, stubborn battles were still going on, houses and buildings were burning down. The ravines were combed, prisoners were still being taken out of the dugouts. There were many dugouts along the steep banks of the river. They found dugouts with hidden German soldiers and officers, who for the most part surrendered. Some had to be forced into it. Many were afraid to give up and frankly rejoiced when they were convinced that they were not being killed. From a row of dugouts and dugouts, our civilians, who had somehow survived that time there, were coming out. They were provided with medical assistance, helped with food.

The commander found out our location. Previously planned turned out to be occupied by other parts. A few hours later they led the column to the river and stopped there. They said that we would settle down here, in a cluster, in the area of several streets, where one-story houses and buildings have been preserved. But they were still occupied by a military unit, which should go to another area. Twilight came, the houses were not vacated. We were outside, freezing.

We spent the night near the cars, by the fires. Those who succeeded, settled in cars, flying cars. In our southern district of the city it was already quiet, almost no shots were heard. In the northern part of Stalingrad, fighting went on all night.

At one of the fires, Senior Lieutenant Kitaichik, a SMERSH representative, was warming himself and talking to the Red Army men. I recalled the incident with Novokhatsky, a Red Army soldier of a motorized rifle battalion. He is in the group

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The prisoners recognized their fellow countryman and shot him point-blank. He was handed over to the military tribunal.

- What is the fate of the Red Army soldier who shot a fellow countryman among German prisoners? I asked him. What did the military tribunal decide?

"The military tribunal did not try him. Defended the battalion commander, and supported the brigade commander. He was transferred to another unit, and he serves somewhere nearby. It was impossible to leave him in the brigade. We are happy with this decision.

Monday [February 1943] ENEMY RESISTANCE CONTINUES.

The artillery unit went to another area, and we settled in the remaining houses and buildings. I was given a relatively small one-story house with two rooms and a kitchen. In the large room he deployed a first-aid post, in a smaller one he put stretchers, kits and other copper belongings. The house was still warm. The remains of fences and buildings were used for firewood. Removed garbage, prepared a place for receiving patients. They didn't have to wait long. Especially many needed dressings. Local residents came out of the dugouts, and there were many of them. Many of them needed medical attention.

They lived next to the Germans in dugouts dug into the steep banks. It was relatively safe there during the bombing and shelling. From the dugouts came the owners of this house - an old man with an old woman. They were housed in a heated annex to the house. The old man had a wound in the shin, gangrene developed, German doctors made deep incisions in the calf muscles and saved his leg as well. His fistula did not close, it had not been bandaged for a long time, the wound festered. He treated the wound and bandaged it. Following him, many other local residents began to come. Some had non-healing bullet and shrapnel wounds. They needed qualified surgical intervention. He provided them with medical assistance whenever possible. Helped many and products.

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Examined sources of drinking water. The water from the wells used by the Germans could not be used by the locals. For them, they were separate or took water from the Tsaritsa River. A more equipped and full-flowing well was under lock and key, only the Germans used this water. It was located somewhat far from us - above the bed of the Tsaritsa River. There was nothing to check the quality of the water. Our Red Army soldiers drank and did not get poisoned. We decided to take water from there for the kitchen and put up guards. All of our company in squads and platoons were housed in houses. In some of which there were local residents with children.

There were a lot of civilians in the area of Dar-Gora. The houses in which they lived for some time have also been preserved. Many of the houses were once evicted by the Germans, where they themselves settled. Some of the local residents were left as servants.

In one of the houses lived two sisters forty and forty-five years old. The Germans also lived with them until the end of hostilities. Our technician-lieutenant Zavgorodny settled with them. A few days later he came to me with complaints of pain when urinating.

It turned out that he had acute gonorrhea. He had repeated contacts with his younger sister, the owner of the apartment. He was supposed to be sent on a business trip. I told his commander not to send him yet, and for what reason. The commander changed his face and admitted that he had had casual sexual contact with her when he came to visit Zavgorodny and he was not at home. A few days later, the Red Army soldier Sulyan turned to me and said that he had contracted gonorrhea from this woman. I looked at him - he was not mistaken.

I reported to the company commander and political officer that three of our people had contracted gonorrhea and from whom and what urgent measures should be taken. The commander offered to gather personnel and warn everyone. I offered to go with the political officer to this woman and warn her that three of our servicemen had become infected from her, so that she would stop all sorts of

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contacts with the military and began treatment. He said that a skin and venereal dispensary was opened at the city hospital. She hysterically called us inventors and a number of obscene words that she was healthy. She may not have been aware of her illness. They offered to bring a certificate from the dermatovenerological dispensary. Help did not bring. The patients were treated.

An amazing incident took place, the hero of which was the Red Army soldier Pupynin. By nature, he sought and found adventure. I decided to get trophies and ransacked dugouts along the Tsaritsa River. In one of the dugouts, I ran into a group of Germans who no longer fought and were afraid to surrender. Later there were different versions of how he did it, but he came to the location of the company with five captured Germans. One of them walked ahead with machine guns hung around his neck, the rest behind him. Pupynin himself brought up the rear with a carbine at the ready. It was an impressive sight when he brought them to the location of the company. He did not know the German language, they apparently did not know Russian, but they carried out all his commands from a mixture of some words only they could understand. The Germans did not resist, were frightened and confused and, perhaps, glad that they were captured and they didn't do anything wrong.

They were taken into custody and sent by truck to the headquarters of the brigade. Pupynin walked like a hero, every time he told with new details what was and was not, how he captured them. Each time the story got more and more heroic. After some time, he suggested that I choose one of the heaps of watches, which he had taken from the captured Germans. Decided to give me a gift for the "services" that, as he put it, I had done him in the past. Be that as it may, he could already pierce a hole in the tunic for "Glory" of any degree.

After dinner, Manko and Naumov came to see me, how I got settled, and expressed a desire to stay with me. Manko I was glad, and a good mood did not allow Naumov to be refused, although his neighborhood was never

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enough. For Manko they brought a bed and put it in a smaller room, where my bed stood, for Naumov he set up a couch in a large room. Again we began to live together, as before. Patients were visiting all day long.

Fighting was going on in the northern part of the city. From time to time, air bombing strikes fell upon the enemy. The artillery shelling did not stop.

But many have already surrendered. More and more often columns of prisoners were led past us from the northern part of the city. These saved their lives and in subsequent battles will not be intimidated by our liberation of the Motherland.

Ours pulled up lagging behind and padded equipment. There were lost individual cars and people, they counted the losses of personnel.

Four of our tanks reached Dar-Gora after repeated repairs, and all with a significant consumption of motor resources. For serious and prolonged hostilities, they were unsuitable. They required a major overhaul, which is possible at specialized tank factories.

At the last hour! January 31, 1943.

Our troops have completed the liquidation of a group of German fascist troops surrounded to the west of the central part of Stalingrad. ...K, on November 23, 1942, 330 thousand enemy troops were surrounded near Stalingrad, and not 220 thousand, as previously reported. ... By the time of the general offensive of our troops - by January 10, 1943 - the German troops surrounded near Stalingrad numbered up to 190,000 soldiers and officers.

SOVINFORMBURO

Tuesday, February 2, 1943 THE ENEMY COMPLETELY SURRENDERED!

It's done! The northern grouping of enemy troops also capitulated. The fighting in Stalingrad has stopped! Defended the city! And most importantly - they defeated the croup

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the worst grouping of the enemy. Several hundred thousand selected troops of the sworn enemy were destroyed here, near Stalingrad, and our troops began to drive him out. Retribution has come! Everyone rejoices. Such a victory! And we stayed alive. The war is not over. There are still many cases and trials ahead, many deaths. But victory, victory has finally become a reality on our front. When they learned that the northern grouping of the enemy had capitulated and the fighting near the Volga had ceased, indiscriminate shooting began. Everyone considered it necessary to discharge a pistol, carbine or rocket launcher into the air. A need arose from within to express joy, delight from this long-awaited news. And she expressed herself with chaotic shooting and multi-colored fireworks all over the sky.

Before dinner, all the personnel lined up. The commander and political officer congratulated everyone on the defeat of the Nazi troops near Stalingrad. The commander said that the distinguished soldiers of the company were presented for government awards. We already knew that award lists had been drawn up and sent to the brigade headquarters. They were written by the clerk Mezentsev. He told me that I was presented to the Order of the Red Star.

We honored the memory of our dead comrades with a minute of silence. Lost a lot of fellow soldiers. During the last twenty days of fighting, from January 10 to January 30, the brigade lost 287 men. Two T-34 tanks, one T-70 and one T-60, reached Dar Gora after repairs.

From January 0 to February 2, 1945, the brigade destroyed about five and a half thousand enemy soldiers and officers, a lot of military equipment, and captured trophies. About twelve and a half thousand Nazis were taken prisoner together with the 145th Naval Brigade and assault detachments of the 422nd Infantry Division.

The day passed like a holiday. Even before dinner, they drank their hundred grams. Those who wished got more - they received it for the entire staff, registered according to the state. I wanted to go to the medical platoon - to see Maya, to share my joy with

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troubles. I didn't know where it was located. They said it was near the headquarters, and it was about five kilometers away from us.

In the evening, Gen, Sargsyan, Dyakov, foreman "Baby", foreman Kruglyakov came. Everyone brought something that was rich. Manko laid out some of his supplies, which he never ran out of. The hill of canned food, bread has grown. They also scraped up alcohol. The storekeeper Lukyanov from his NZ also added a little. Naumov was putting things in order on the table. An artillery shell filled with diesel fuel was burning. He lit a kerosene lamp, which the owner of the house had brought the day before. Celebration in full light! The windows were not curtained — the need for blackout was gone. How great it all is! True, there is still a long way to complete victory. For now, this is just the beginning. Good time!

So, in the circle of fellow soldiers - comrades at Dar-Gora in Stalingrad, they celebrated such a long-awaited day - the defeat of the enemy in this city and the beginning of his exile. The political officer, many other commanders, foremen, and Red Army men also came in. They ate what they were rich with.

There was an urgent need for fraternal fellowship, conversation. And it's not about the alcohol. Nobody got drunk. We were drunk from the happiness of victory, from the consciousness that we were still alive. We have gone through such a difficult path to the present day, we have seen and experienced so much. And all this came to an end!

Each of these people became dear to me, and I became dear, as it seemed to me, for each of them, we were all related by the same fate. And the new political officer in a very short time became our family and friends. So he endeared us to himself with his attitude towards each of us, towards the common cause. Mikhailovsky somehow did not get along with us. Or is this how a commander should be - above and aside from everyone? Unlikely. We have the same fate, a common cause. And in a combat situation, he should not be isolated from fellow soldiers. That's what my comrades thought and said. "Baby" believed that everyone should be sent on vacation. They deserved

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and after a year and a half, it's time to visit your family, your wife, at last, until you find another. They objected to him. Who will end the war? He kept arguing that his son would forget him, get used to another. Okay, if the wife is alive, she will find another, but it's a pity for her son. And he understood that the end of the war would not be soon, and we were all its prisoners, and that there would be enough to do for another couple of years. Sasha Gen dreamed, said that he imagined what life would be like for everyone after the end of the war. It will be so good for all the people, as it is good for all of us now. There will be a nationwide brotherhood of victors - people of the same fate, who defended their homeland from the hated enemy, the enslaver. "To live up to this time," he concluded, "that's the life of a bullet—it's equally good for everyone!" "There can be no equally good life for everyone," Sargsyan intervened. "The scoundrels and grabbers will remain, and if the position allows, and conscience is not enough, then they will grab more for themselves, at the expense of others." "They won't give it," Manko objected, "they will condemn it, or they won't allow it themselves." "He won't allow it," Naumov intervened. - If I am a big boss, then really I will not allow myself to live better than subordinates? What kind of equality are we talking about? Natoyai bosses. Greater responsibility and, accordingly, more blessings". "Of course, whoever answers more and who has a bigger post, he will receive more, but not very much. Twice is probably too much. Percent on thirty bolyn can be. The question is about getting paid for your work, and not because once the boss, you can take for yourself at the expense of others. A person should receive and have benefits according to the cost of his work and, it is true, pay some taxes to the state. The bosses will receive salaries not at the expense of others, but from state funds. - "Someone like Kostya, having become the boss, will rake in more for himself at the expense of others, without earning it." "At the expense of the state," Naumov specified. Where does the state get it from? Somewhere, in the form of a tax. The wealth of the state is the wealth of the people. This was the conversation...

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For some reason, some people think that it is not a sin for the state to rake in, believing that this does not affect everyone else.

Everyone is the same and everything will not be the same. There will be dodgy, cunning people who will not forget themselves, - Sargsyan spoke about his fears.

— Laws will be adopted such that the scum will not dare to climb into the arena. They will be punished if they go against society. We will build communism. This is when everything is fair, everyone will get as much as they need, they won't take too much. To do this, everyone will need to work well, not only for themselves, but also for others. Or rather, for others, then it will hit you. Without a whip. Consciousness will be so high that everyone will understand what's what, without coercion, - Gen.

- Wait and see. For the time being, the war must be ended, and there is no need to wish for more. And there justice will come by itself, and there will be no place for meanness. What did they fight for? asked himself and all the other Dyakov.

- For a just life, so that there are no meannesses.

- That's it.

Most believed that our suffering, losses would not pass without a trace for the survivors and would be reflected in their entire subsequent life. The war will cleanse the thoughts and souls of people from filth and meanness, and people will understand each other better, everyone will work for the common good, as now, together, all our people are achieving victory over the enemy. So we thought and hoped, and this was basically what we talked about late at night at a modest soldier's feast. Such a hard-won victory, and no one doubted it any more, cannot go to the benefit and prosperity of all the peoples of our country for all eternity.

Wednesday, February 3, 1943 RECEIVED epaulettes.



Woke up with a heavy head. Must have been drunk. It was difficult to get up. Manko and Naumov felt no better, especially Naumov. All of us were well "crumpled".

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With difficulty I gathered myself, rinsed my face and neck, and quickly got dressed. We need to have time to take a sample so that the people didn't expect me.

Taking a sample has become a formality, but it must be observed. Food has already been prepared and will be distributed and eaten. The cooks are tested and have learned how to cook. Someone should be legally responsible for the quality of cooking, for its safety. At first, I had to deal with cooks, sanitary and hygienic issues, and cooking technology a lot, I could not do without prohibiting the issuance of low-quality food for my own misfortune and punishment. So you need to take a sample. Jumped out into the street. Immediately, everything was frozen with cold, his breath caught, his eyelids stuck together from the frost. Only now did I feel how strong, penetrating cold was. Such a harsh winter, and we weathered it. There is a lot of snow around, snowdrifts, and in the ravines you can fall headlong. A few days ago, during the fighting, they did not notice this. There was not even snow in the places where the fighting was going on - it melted from fire, soot and smoke. And not very cold - it was hot. And here, in the yards and in the ravine, white-white from the snow.

Breakfast was ready and they were waiting for me. The people had already gathered near the kitchen and beckoned me, probably before coming. And now they weren't joking. I rarely drank alcohol, saw no joy in it, and was not drawn to it. The personnel had never seen me in a state of alcoholic intoxication, so they were surprised at my appearance. I took breakfast for three. Manko and Naumov came. We had breakfast. Naumov found among the leftovers what to hangover, the hardest thing was for him.

He planned to break out into the medical platoon. I wanted to congratulate my colleagues, to see Maya, but so far it was not on time and I did not know where they were located. All patients came to me for dressing. Achieved the manufacture of the cover and protection of the well. I checked the availability and quality of products in the kitchen. The bread was frozen - ice bricks: it was difficult to cut with a knife, crumbling into ice fragments. At

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We decided to give him out for a day to keep people warm.

It's time for lunch. He took a sample and brought it to the first-aid post as usual - for the three of us: me, Nikolai and Kostya. In two pots there is borscht for one and two, in the third pot there is porridge with canned meat and gravy for three. I got bread in the morning for the whole day and sugar. He put dinner on the table. Kostya came. Rubbing his hands, he said fervently:

- It's good to eat hot food from the cold.

I washed my hands and went to the table. I went to the washbasin to wash my hands. Usually, Kostya ate the first dish from a pot, in which there was one person, and from the second, where there was for two, Manko and I ate together. There were plates here in the house, but we didn't use them. In the mirror over his shoulder, I saw how Kostya went up to the table, took a full cauldron, in which there was borscht for two, and poured the liquid part from it into another cauldron, in which there was one. The pot, from which he drained the liquid part, put it in front of him, saying at the same time:

"Where it's tighter — my bowler hat," and began to eat the thick contents, where there was borscht on two.

I, amazed by what I saw, kept washing my hands, when the water in the washbasin ran out, I dried my hands and did not know what to do next. I could not move away from the washstand, I stood there, wiping my long dry hands. What to do? Expose here? And then?.. What then? Throw him out of the infirmary with a scandal? I can no longer be together as I was. Start a quarrel, or maybe a fight? I never

I didn't fight and I didn't meet with such meanness. He put on his overcoat and ran out into the street. He asked after me if I would eat. He replied that he was fed up with the test, and slammed the doors.

Met Manko.

- Did you have lunch?

- No, you don't want to, eat, don't leave me. I'm on business.

And he quickly went across the steppe into the frost, snowdrifts, to the ravine, to the river Tsaritsa. If I could, I would run far, far away. By brisk walking he calmed down a little and became

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fly that did not expose him on the spot. He scolded himself as a slobber, a coward. Indeed, why did not deal with him immediately in hot pursuit? Sdreyfil?

Went along the river. The left bank, higher and steeper, was riddled with trenches, between which one could see the entrances to dugouts and dugouts. There were many dugouts on the right bank. The bed of the Tsaritsa was frozen, there must have been little water, but there was a lot of snow - there were high bizarre snowdrifts. I wanted to go to the medical platoon, but I did not know where they were and where to go. There were many military units around where I was walking. I did not want to return to the company. I walked along some streets, roads, snowdrifts for about two hours. Then he returned to the location of the company. Everything stood in its place. There was no one in the infirmary. The table was cleared and the dishes were washed. Nevertheless, I decided to explain myself to Naumov. Found him in a transport platoon near the wheeled vehicles. He called him aside and said to him:

- We will not understand. You must leave the company, immediately, today, or I will make a big scandal, and in disgrace you will be forced to flee from the brigade.

Where will I go and why? What did you come up with?

You must transfer to another unit or unit. Don't ask why. You know, you know, you're a bastard.

- Oh well! Quiet! I don't know or understand anything. What are you up to against me?

- I didn't do anything. You have decided for yourself. I can remember. Dinner sealed your fate. Take your clothes and don't show up to the infirmary again. You've done a lot of mean things before. This time you will not be forgiven. So get out of our unit.

- I'm not going anywhere.

"Then I will make sure that they leave you in great disgrace.

"I don't understand, what are you up to?" In general, do not become a bone in my throat, I will spit it out, I will crush it! he hissed angrily.

His appearance was terrible. It seemed to me that he would pull out a gun and shoot me. felt what can

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do it. This was evidenced by his posture, with his clenched fists slightly outstretched, his eyes filled with blood, and his twitching jaws. We were alone among the wheeled vehicles and drifts of snow and looked at each other. He really did not understand what had happened, or he was overcome by fear of possible disgrace, or simply indignant that he had intruded into his actions. Meanness began to cover impudence. Trick, self-defense insolent? What a beast this is! How could he spoil a barrel of honey with a fly in the ointment - the joy of victory, military friendship, brotherhood? How could he?

This one can. Such is he, his insides, his essence. For all these months of communication with him, all his behavior was on the verge of dishonesty, meanness. What about the drugstore robbery in early August last year? No wonder Manko barely endured him. He thought only about himself, about his well-being, acted in his own favor and did not consider anything or anyone. With such, as they say, you can't go into reconnaissance. So we stood facing each other for a while. There was nothing more to talk about. I walked away from him and felt with my back that he was looking after me, drilling through me. An unpleasant chill ran down his back. He is capable of everything. It is terrible to imagine that such a person will also enter a new post-war life. How many good people have been taken away by the war and how many more will die? ..

By the time of dinner, an order had arrived from the brigade headquarters to take the personnel of the company to a rally to be held tomorrow, February 4, 1943, in Stalingrad, on the Square of the Fallen Fighters. And it began. Everyone stirred. Calls were sent to the brigade with the arrangements for the time, place of gathering, uniforms, and so on. The commander with the foreman of the company and the clerk Mezentsev left for the headquarters of the brigade. Something must be obtained and everything clarified. We were waiting for news.

Already late in the evening, foreman Nikolaev brought several dozen new sheepskin coats and shoulder straps from the brigade warehouse. Introduced shoulder straps for our troops. Shoulder straps! Unusual concept, associated with the royal army and suddenly

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to us, the commanders and Red Army men of the Soviet Army, - shoulder straps. Doesn't fit.

Short coats were distributed to drivers, more qualified and distinguished repairmen and commanders, who, more often than others, traveled as part of technical support groups to the battlefield. New short fur coats were distributed by the company commander according to the list. And he appointed at his own discretion and personal sympathy. The foreman of the company, Nikolaev, took a new short fur coat for himself, although he still went about in a short fur coat. Got Manko. They didn't give me up, the commander didn't put me on the list, apparently believing that I was less cold than others. I didn't have my own car and I wasn't attached to any battalion. Freeze, like everyone else. I was where I needed to be. Of course, it would not hurt to provide all the personnel with sheepskin coats, but there were not enough of them for everyone. Considering the attitude of the commander towards me, I did not expect to receive a short fur coat, although I was entitled to it, like many others.

Began to sew shoulder straps. I sewed on an overcoat. Those who had sheepskin coats were sewn to them. Gymnasts and epaulettes for them have not yet been issued. It was not visible under the overcoat, and they left tunics with cubes in their buttonholes.

All evening there was only talk about the upcoming rally, and preparations were made for it. We went to bed very late to rest. Extinguished the wick in the sleeve. Already began to doze, as Naumov came. He came anyway, undressed in the dark, and went to bed on the couch. And this time he didn't care about anyone. He did what was convenient only for him.

The total losses of enemy troops in the area of the Don, Volga, Stalingrad amounted to about 1.5 million people, up to 3500 tanks and assault guns, 12 thousand guns and mortars, up to 5 thousand aircraft and a large number of other equipment. Such losses of forces and means had a catastrophic effect on the general strategic situation and shook the entire military machine of Nazi Germany to its foundations.

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The victory of our troops near Stalingrad meant a radical turning point in the war in favor of the Soviet Union and the beginning of the expulsion of enemy troops from our territory...

Zhukov G.K., The Stalingrad epic. M.: Nauka, 1968, p.71.

Of course, Stalingrad was a turning point in the history of the Second World War, as the wave of the German offensive broke on the Volga, only to then roll back like a wave of surf. But no matter how hard the loss of the 6th Army was, it did not yet mean the loss of the war for

East and thus war in general. It was still possible to achieve a draw if that was the goal of German policy and the command of the armed forces.

Field Marshal E. Moneypain. Lost Victories, S. 352.

Thursday, February 4, 1943 Rally of the WINNERS.

Got up very early. Still dark in the yard. I was in a hurry to take a sample from breakfast early, as the personnel still needed to put themselves in order before the rally began. I grabbed two kettles - mine and Manko and asked him to heat the stove. Chilled out the room overnight. Jumped out into the yard. The frost already took my breath away - it stood so strong from the night. Somewhere under thirty degrees. You won't be able to stay at a rally for very long in such a cold, and even in an overcoat. It's a long way to walk, and then stand on the square for a long time and freeze. You think.

The kitchens were outside. Shikhalev fussed around them. The hat is tied with ribbons on the chin, the collar and the upper part of the overcoat are covered with frost.

"It will be here soon, comrade paramedic," he replied to my greeting. He kept jumping up and down, clapping his hands—not warmed up yet. For breakfast I prepared barley porridge seasoned with stewed pork, tea. Lukyanov gave out sugar and bread. I tried writing and allowed the issuance of breakfast. He took breakfast for two, me and Nikolai, porridge in one pot, tea in another and carried it to the first-aid post. Outside near the kitchen

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who did not take food - it was very cold. They ate where they lived: in cars, in houses.

Naumov got up, seeing that he had brought breakfast for two, did not wash himself, silently took the bowler hat and left.

Why didn't you take breakfast for everyone? Nikolai asked.

We won't be with him again. He doesn't have to live with us. He really needs to leave the company.

"That one, like him," Manko got agitated, "what happened?"

- It happened. He sucks. For now, I can't say. For his own good, he must leave the company, as I told him yesterday.

- What happened anyway? We live together, I should know.

I couldn't tell him what happened. Hot-tempered by nature, he would not forgive him. It's hard to imagine what he would do with it. To avoid scandal, I won't tell him anything yet.

The time will come, you will know. Don't ask me again, okay?

"You weren't supposed to hide from me about Kostya. He is my deputy. But let it be your way.

We heard three gong strikes at short intervals - a command to build. We hurried to the exit. The review was conducted by the company commander. Behind him, like a shadow, was his deputy for the technical department, Kalmykov. Impeccably efficient and dog-like devoted to him, like Sancho Panza. Both of them were in brand new white sheepskin coats, girded with belts, with pistols hanging on their sides in holsters, planchettes and epaulettes on their shoulders. They would have given me out of old sheepskin coats. It would still be warmer. We'll have to talk. Next to them stood the political officer in his already worn-out sheepskin coat and also in uniform. It is still unusual to see ours in uniform. In the ranks on the right flank they placed personnel in sheepskin coats, and in overcoats - on the left. The latter were much less. Almost all commanders and sergeants had new white coats. Many drivers

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and the repairmen, who had distinguished themselves more by their selfless work, got worn short fur coats, which can be seen from the shoulders of those who took new ones for themselves. And the cooks got old sheepskin coats. Naumov also had a new sheepskin coat. Exchanged with someone, not by the good will of the latter, as a senior. I think that this was so, because he was not on the lists for the new one. All were in boots. Walking around the formation and sternly examining everyone, the commander said:

"Only those in sheepskin coats will go to the rally. The rest remain in the company. Listen to my command! Dressed in overcoats get out of line!

Someone was upset, someone was glad not to freeze the day in the cold. For some reason, I remained standing in the ranks. He was so determined to go to the rally that he could not leave the line.

- Doctor! Get out of line!

I must have been so upset that one of the repairmen took pity on me.

"Doctor, take my sheepskin coat, it's true, it's not new," he turned to me, "it should fit exactly, only ordinary shoulder straps, without stars."

I immediately began to take off my overcoat, and he took off his sheepskin coat, and we exchanged them.

"Maybe I'll have time to change my shoulder straps," I said.

"It will do, put it on," voices were heard.

Commander followed:

— Get up! Equal!

He saw what we were doing on the left flank, but said nothing.

- Attention!

I continued to put myself in military order: I had already put on a sheepskin coat, fastened my belt, straightened my holster, threw over my shoulder a sanitary bag, which I never parted with, and a gas mask.

- At ease! - the command followed, and the commander once again began to bypass the system, examining everyone. One Red Army soldier in a very dirty sheepskin coat was put out of action and ordered to stay. The repairman asked to be allowed to go to the rally,

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but the commander did not change his decision. He came up to me and looked at me skeptically.

- I want to freeze. Stay," he said, "you'll pass for an orderly."

He turned the column to the right, became at the head of it, and we went from our location along Stalingrad to the northeast to the headquarters of the brigade. Closing in a sheepskin coat and felt boots, with a parabellum in a holster, with a sanitary bag over my shoulder, at the end of the column with my comrades in arms, I went to the rally.

The winners walked through Stalingrad ...

From here began the expulsion of the enemy from our Motherland. It is even difficult to imagine the significance of what happened in hot pursuit. The Battle of Stalingrad and our brilliant and difficult victory will go down as a golden page in the Heroic history of our Motherland for many centuries. And I participated in these

events. Great! And I'm going, even as the last one, together with fellow soldiers to a solemn rally dedicated to the defeat of the enemy. The soul rejoices! All my comrades are in the same mood.

The winners walked through Stalingrad ...

We walked along a road pitted with shells, mines and bombs, through cleared streets, courtyards, squares, past burnt and destroyed houses, past the ruins to the headquarters of the brigade, from where we would go further to the place of the rally.

They also cleared sections of the road along the route with tractors and tanks. There were columns of captured Germans along the road itself and to the side. Groups of Nazi warriors cleared rubble and roads. Wrapped in scarves and blankets over gray-green overcoats, the former warriors now presented a pitiful sight. How much suffering they have caused our people. And they walk on our land for themselves already outside the war. We saved their lives, they are fed with our bread, they are provided with medical assistance. Then they will leave for themselves after the war. And they will all be forgiven. Only our people can be so generous.

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We arrived at the brigade headquarters. We walked for a long time, five kilometers. The frost was nothing to us - warmed up on the road. The units of the brigade were already standing, looked by the command. We became on the left flank the most extreme behind the personnel of service units. I greeted the military paramedic Modzelevsky, warmly met with Dr. Panchenko. The medical platoon was behind the control company.

Our company was remarked that there were a lot of dirty sheepskin coats. Must understand that the repairmen. All were left in the ranks. While the brigade was reviewing, I ran behind the formation to the head of the column, to the medical platoon. I greeted my colleagues and congratulated them on their victory. Maya didn't see it. Bolshakova noticed that I was looking for someone, and said that Dr. Maya had remained in the medical platoon, had a cold, and that someone had to be left with the sick.

The brigade doctor, lieutenant colonel of the medical service Jatiev, approached the medical platoon. Already walked without a stick. He greeted me warmly, congratulated me on my victory, and took me aside.

- What happened to you with Maximov? - he asked.

- There was nothing.

"I don't know why, but he didn't sign your award list. Put a resolution: "Premature."

We both looked at each other. He is inquiring, alas bewildered.

"Maybe because of Nurse Ladna," I said. - The kingdom of heaven to her.

Then added:

- He once told me before her death not to stand in front of the father - he will flog or I will fall into hell. I picked her up early one morning and made her go to help the wounded after a night spent with him. She didn't want to get up. Maybe he treated her rudely, and she told him

complained.

— Be that as it may, you were not presented for the award. The sheets have not yet been sent to the front headquarters. Maybe something can be done. Don't despair, get on with it.

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I ran to myself. Too bad I didn't see Maya. Of course, he was upset by Jatiev's message. After the rally, I decided to visit Dr. Maya, congratulate her on her victory, and asked Mikhailovsky for permission to go to the medical platoon on the way back. He categorically forbade it.

- Together with the company you will go to your location. Only in the mouth! Understood? I thought about chatting. You go to the company, and no talk. Understood?

- Understood.

The command of the chief of staff of the brigade followed:

- Equalize! Attention! Right alignment!

The commander of the brigade, Major Sadovsky, and the head of the political department, battalion commissar Maksimov, were walking towards the ranks. The chief of staff, Major Kalugin, reported that the brigade to go to the rally had been formed. The commander greeted the personnel and congratulated them on the defeat of the Nazi troops. A powerful repeated cheer swept far through the ruins of the city. The command was given:

- Under the banner, quietly!

The commander of the reconnaissance platoon, Sergei Bolshakov, accompanied by submachine gunners, carried the unfurled battle flag of the 254th Tank Brigade along the formation, on outstretched arms. I saw the banner for the first time when it was presented during the formation of a brigade in Kostyrevo before being sent to the front.

The line froze. They went to the head of the column and stopped there. A command followed, and the personnel of the 254th Tank Brigade marching in a marching column, with a deployed banner scorched in battle ahead, walked along the road hastily cleared of snow and rubble among the ruins of the city to the rally. Ahead of the column are the brigade commander and his combat comrades-in-arms — the battalion commissar, the commanders of the brigade headquarters, followed by combat battalions, companies led by their commanders, service units, including our technical support company and I — a military paramedic, closing the entire brigades.

The winners walked through Stalingrad ...

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Chalk ground. The hard frost fettered with burning pain the knees and hands in cotton mittens, the frosty wind marked parts of the face with white spots, frost from the exhaled air settled on the eyebrows, mustache, cap with earflaps, collar! They rubbed their faces as they walked, watching each other. Accelerated step, warmed up by fast walking. The mood was good. Everyone around rejoiced, felt like participants in a very important event. The enemy was defeated and in such large numbers! Our troops are pursuing the enemy retreating to the west and crushing him. So you can beat him. And the enemy will be defeated!

The winners walked through Stalingrad ...

And here we met columns of prisoners of war, following to the collection points under the protection of the Red Army. In places on the road and in the depths, groups of German prisoners of war worked to clear the rubble and ruins. And now they still removed the frozen corpses of their soldiers and officers and stacked them in piles near the destroyed buildings. As our column passed, the prisoners of war stretched out and froze. Haughty and arrogant, cruel and merciless soldiers of Hitler in the recent past. And now? Overgrown, hands in bandages. frostbitten parts of the body, in gray-green overcoats, and over the blanket, strange very large straw or wooden shoes, windings. These creatures are also from the human race, but they lost everything human with their inhuman actions. And there was no pity for them. What were they looking for here, along the banks of the Volga, the original Russian river, so far away from their Germany? Doom? The vast majority found it. And some of them stand at attention in front of the passing

our columns - the columns of the victors. The hand of the clock of history has finally turned to our people.

The winners walked through Stalingrad ...

The feeling of confidence in their own strength, in themselves, the feeling of the owner of their land was carried by people who defeated the enemy. Ahead they sang, and the formation picked up the song. Soldiers sang,

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our fervent songs, and it was well sung in the city liberated from the enemy. Songs sounded in Stalingrad, not explosions of shells and bombs along the majestic Volga River.

The winners walked through Stalingrad ...

We walked past the ruins of a city that had 600,000 inhabitants before the war. Haven't met any local yet. Around for many kilometers of the way there are boxes of buildings with gaping holes of former windows, buildings without roofs and ceilings. Along the former streets, cement pillars without electrical wires have been preserved in places. Sometimes there were iron gates that marked the places of former courtyards and houses. Wooden gates and fences burned down or were used for firewood. The enemy completely destroyed the city, leaving only ruins. Let, but the city is in our hands, and it will be rebuilt again. It will be even better than before.

The winners walked through Stalingrad ...

Before our eyes passed the days and nights of the past battle experienced by us, the combat path of the brigade, which coincided with all stages of the Battle of Stalingrad.

End of July 1942. Formation of the brigade and loading into the echelon.

Early August 1942. Unloading from the echelons north of Stalingrad and a two hundred and fifty-kilometer march on their own along the Kalmyk steppes to the south, and the first tank battle with enemy tank troops advancing on Stalingrad at the 74th kilometer junction. An unsuccessful first battle for us, heavy losses, gaining experience. And then fighting together with other units and formations of the 64th Army in the area of Abganerovo, Tinguta, the state farm named after Yurkin, Aksai. Delay for several weeks of the advance of the enemy to Stalingrad at the cost of heavy casualties.

End of August. Bloody defensive battles with the advancing enemy and retreat to new defensive lines. A short-term delay of the enemy, which made it possible for our rifle divisions of the 64th Army to build a new defense. We lost all the tanks there, many personnel died. Withdrawal with fighting to the southern outskirts.

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Beginning of the barbaric bombardment of Stalingrad on 23 August. The city is on fire, the city is being destroyed, the city is resisting. Beginning of September. Exit from battles to formation. Crossing the Volga to the left bank. Bomb attacks, artillery and mortar shelling of approaches to the river. The city is on fire, the shore is on fire, crossings are burning, the surface of the Volga River is burning, barges and tugboats are exploding and sinking. Our civilians are dying in anticipation of crossings by the river, cattle that have accumulated near the banks of the Volga, stolen from Ukraine, from a number of regions of Russia, are dying. We survived all this, withstood, overcame, although we suffered heavy losses.

The winners walked through Stalingrad ...

End of September. Received replenishment. Insanely long march along the Volga to Khanata. Fights for a foothold in the inter-lake defile, the capture of the village of Sadovoe, battles for Tundutovo and retreat to the steppe. Hidden in a remote village of the Kalmyk steppes - Zergenta, received replenishment. Participation



surrounded by the enemy near Stalingrad, in the battles for the creation of an external front of encirclement, repelling the deblocking group of Manstein, tank brigade raids on Aksai, Zhutov, Umanskoye to Kotelnikovo. And, finally, participation in the defeat of the encircled enemy at Stalingrad, heavy fighting on its southern outskirts, bloody battles for every house, street, station and the complete defeat of the enemy.

The winners walked through Stalingrad ...

Losses of fellow soldiers, loss of equipment, piles of enemy corpses, columns of prisoners of war. And now to the right in front of my eyes, the Volga, bound by ice, calmly flows, resting from the recent massacre, of which it was a witness and participant.

The winners walked through Stalingrad ....

Regiments and divisions with unfolded banners came out of the side streets onto the main thoroughfare of the city, adjoined each other, and the solemn procession stretched for many kilometers. Everyone went in the same direction - to the rally of the winners.

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The fate of Stalingrad was decided not only by tanks and cannons, planes and other military equipment, but also by the anger, fury of the defenders, hatred of the enemy for the desecrated Motherland, a deep understanding that the fate of loved ones and relatives, the fate of the whole country is decided here, near the banks of the Volga. , which gave strength in the struggle for victory.

With such thoughts, they came to the Square of the Fallen Fighters for the Victory rally. The road to it led us for more than a year and a half. Many fellow soldiers, very many did not reach us. In total, during the Stalingrad epic, the 254th tank brigade lost, taking into account the replenishment, nine hundred people killed, wounded and missing. Three times during the battle, when she lost all tanks, she was withdrawn for a short time from the battles for repeated formations.

Without a permanent "owner", the personnel were less likely to be awarded government awards. They were not awarded posthumously, which would be a memory for relatives.

Hundreds of thousands of our soldiers from other units and formations laid down their lives in this battle. We got the victory at Stalingrad at such a high price. The final victory is still far away, but we believed in it, and Stalingrad brought it closer.

We came to the Square of the Fallen Fighters. It was filled with troops fighting for Stalingrad. Representatives of glorious regiments, brigades, divisions, corps, armies and their illustrious commanders and commanders stood here with unfolded battle banners. Next to the troops, columns of workers from Stalingrad enterprises were built, forging victory in the besieged city and defending it in the people's militia.

The victors stood in the liberated Stalingrad, waiting for a rally on the Square of the Fallen Fighters.

Around the box are charred and destroyed houses without windows, ceilings and roofs, but we firmly believed that the city on the Volga would be reborn from ruins.

... Marches, Soviet songs were heard from loudspeakers. Burning frost forced to actively behave in the ranks,

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some danced to the beat of the music. Finally, everything was quiet, the rally began

We were congratulated by the front command on the victory at Stalingrad. A member of the Military Council of the front, Khrushchev, delivered an impassioned speech. They read out the order of the Supreme Commander-in-Chief, Comrade Stalin, in which the troops of the Stalingrad, Don and other fronts congratulated on the successful completion of the liquidation of the encircled enemy armies and thanked all the participants in the battle.

In an appeal to the Red Army soldiers and commanders, read out by Chuyanov, Secretary of the Stalingrad Regional Committee of the CPSU(b), the workers of Stalingrad warmly thanked the soldiers who defended the city on the Volga and vowed to restore it for a new creative life.

In conclusion, we wished new military successes in expelling the fascist invaders from our Motherland.

Many units, formations and armies left the square to the west and joined new fronts to expel the fascist invaders. Our 64th Army also left, in which our brigade took part at the beginning of the Battle of Stalingrad and at its end. And the 254th tank brigade remained in Stalingrad on Dar Gora and entered the Stavka reserve. We will get replenishment, and new roads and military actions are waiting for us. We do not need combat experience. The personnel received it during the period of the Battle of Stalingrad.

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Popular science edition

GREAT PATRIOTIC: UNKNOWN WAR

Fialkovsky Leonid Iosifovich

STALINGRAD APOCALYPSE

Tank brigade in hell

Published in the author's edition Managing editor I. Petrovsky Art editor /1. Volkov Technical editor V. Kulagina  
Computer proofing N. Bilyukina Proofreader O. Suprun

Yauza Publishing House LLC 109507, Moscow, Samarkand boulevard, 15

For correspondence: 127299, Moscow, st. Clara Zetkin, 18/5 Tel.: (495) 745-58-23

OOO Publishing House Eksmo 127299, Moscow, st. Clara Zetkin, 18/5. Tel. 411-68-86, 956-39-21 Note glade: mmmm.exto.gi E-tai: and\Noo@ekzto.gi

Signed for publication on 07.04.2011. Format 84x108 /, „. Headset "Newton". Offset printing. Conv. oven I. 23.52.

Circulation 3500 copies. Order No. 8081

Printed in OOO "North-Western Printing House", 188300, Leningrad region, Gatchina, st. Zheleznodorozhnaya, 45B 1\$VM 978-5-699-49076-9

9'785699'490769'>

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was at the front

m, the author kept daily records for the first time in 1942. This unique document is a trial chronicle of the Battle of Stalingrad, used by a veteran of the 254th tank brigade, who fought through the escaping battle of the Great Patriotic War from the Don steppes to the Volga slopes and the Red Army's counteroffensive in November until Manstein's blocking blow was repulsed and the "boiler" was completely liquidated. . During the 200 days and nights of the Battle of Stalingrad, the brigade lost more than 900 personnel and was reorganized three times after the loss of all tanks. This book is an extremely frank and truthful story about the bloodiest battle in human history, which became the turning point of the Second World War.

"Stubborn battles go on for every street, every house, 'at the Subdivision of the brigade they trample on the railway bridge over the Tsaritsa River - they can't manage to take it. Ours lost 5 tanks on the outskirts of the city. It is impossible to pull them back to a safe place by massive shelling from the enemy... The \_ Because of enemy is divided into two groups - the northern one and the other one - but continues to stubbornly resist, putting our tanks and personnel out of action. The Germans are clamped to the last, even being in the absence of death \_ one position, they starve, freeze, but do not , surrender. Even the wounded and sick continue to fight ... What kind of analysts, devoted to their Fuhrer, do you have to be, in order to be cold, frostbitten to fight to the end, while you are able to hold a weapon, to die for many balls M Roe from your own home - in the name of

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